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**INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT**  
**{With special reference to the district of old Saran, Bihar}**  
**1857—1947**



**INDIAN NATIONAL  
MOVEMENT  
(WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE  
DISTRICT OF OLD SARAN, BIHAR)  
1857—1947**

*Nagendra Kumar*

**JANAKI PRAKASHAN  
Ashok Rajpath, Patna-800004**

***Indian National Movement (with special reference to the  
district of old Saran, Bihar) 1857—1947***

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***To***  
***the sacred memory of my grand-father late***  
***Shri Jamuna Prasad***



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H.R. College,  
Mairwa (Siwan), Bihar.  
The 4th January, 1979.

*Nagendra Kumar*

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## INTRODUCTION

When history is being written we are invited to look at it as a painting hung in a gallery without being too curious about what might have happened in the studios they come from. Many of the side issues are completely ruled out and many areas of discussion are entirely omitted, because great events and personalities lie very heavy on our heads. The story begins to be organic only when we plough through the smaller people, the opponents and the disciples of the great, the ordinary men and the simple folk. But the spirit and essence of history is to understand fully the character of both great and small men involved in the drama, their motives, their successes and failures. Several volumes have come out dealing with the history of National Movement in India or the Freedom Movement in the States, but so far no body has taken pains to deal with the role of a district or a Tahsil in the National Movement with the result that the important but unknown contribution of the ordinary people living in the remote corners of the country have not come into limelight. This is why I have taken up subject of my discussion 'Indian National Movement (with special reference to the district of Saran) 1857 to 1947 A.D. The district of Saran in the State of Bihar attracted my attention because it is not only the birth-place of great Indian patriots like Braj Kishore Prasad, Rajendra Prasad, Jai Prakash Narayan and others but it always remained in the vanguard of India's struggle for independence even since 1857. Saran also attracted the attention of the great nationalist, Mazharul Haque, who adopted it as his permanent home.

The Indian nationalism has not been a mere political phenomenon. It has proved to be a dynamic force of gigantic magnitude and has influenced Indian life in various ways. It drew inspiration from some of the liberal ideas of the West through the new system of education and also from internal cultural renaissance. It aimed not only at securing political freedom of the country from alien domination but also sought to effect a silent but potent socio-economic revolution. It is high time

to understand the true nature and significance of our national awakening and national struggle, so that we can conserve the fruits of our hard own independence in the best possible ways.

The people of India had never accepted the foreign rule in their country with alacrity. The latter half of the eighteenth and first quarter of the nineteenth century witnessed a sincere attempt by the different Indian powers to throw off the yoke of the British rule. When the power of the British became more and more consolidated and the ruling chiefs were eliminated one after another, the discontent began to pervade the common people, smouldering within, unable as it was to express itself for want of proper leadership, organization and resources. A series of events and activities by the agents of the British Government drove the discontent further down and spread it to wider dimensions. These events formed a background to, and culminated in the great outbreak of 1857 which together with the organised armed rebellion of the Wahabis to restore Muslim supremacy (1850-1863) formed an important phase in India's struggle for independence. The rising of 1857-59, in which the district of Saran played a notable part, was thus not an isolated movement organised and led by well known rulers and zamindars of the country.

The next phase of India's struggle for independence was marked by the growth of patriotic and national sentiments chiefly due to English education and the contact with the Western culture. Western ideas of patriotism and nationalism, hitherto unknown in this country, gradually made their influence felt, as the ideal of the British democratic system of government animated the people. The vision of a united India as a self-governing dominion within British Empire dominated the newly awakened political consciousness of the people. This phase of the national struggle roughly covers the period from 1860 to 1905.

The third phase started with the *Swadeshi* Movement in Bengal in 1905 and ended with the death of Bal Gangadhar Tilak in 1920. During this period of Indian freedom movement the old spirit of faith and devotion to the British was shaken, and constitutional agitation was denounced as mendicancy which produced no result. The political goal was now clearly defined as *Swaraj* or 'absolute autonomy free from foreign control'. The Radical Nationalists expressed open

disavowal of Moderate Nationalist idea of self-government within the Empire. Besides the radical *Nationalists* who worked from within the Congress, there were the *Extremists*, who aimed at the salvation of the motherland from alien control by following revolutionary methods through secret organizations and activities such as preparation of bombs and intimidation or killing of oppressive officials. The Government, on the other hand, used stringent measures of repression to stamp out 'terrorism' or 'anarchism'.

Then started the fourth phase of the national struggle from 1920 which continued up to 1947, when India achieved her Independence. This phase was almost wholly dominated by the dynamic personality of Mahatma Gandhi and has, therefore, been rightly designated as the 'Age of Gandhi'. Mahatma Gandhi evolved a new technique and formed new weapons to fight the mighty British imperialists. The technique and the weapons were crowned with success. Thus the attainment of independence by India on the 15th August, 1947 was the fruit of unceasing toils and sufferings of her millions of people through immense difficulties and severest trials, under the unique leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, which had in it an unbending and purifying moral force. I have tried in my own humble way to depict all these phases of the national struggle with particular reference to the role played by the district of Saran in it.

I have gone into minutest details of the role of the district of Saran in Non-cooperation Movement of 1920-1921 and the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-1934. Moreover, I have also critically analysed the contribution of the people of Saran to the Individual Civil Disobedience Movement of 1940-1941 and to the Quit India Movement of 1942, in which hundreds of the brave sons of Saran made great sacrifices for the independence of their dear motherland.

I may also claim as an original contribution to this book to have brought into limelight the unknown but important contributions of those people of Saran who had dedicated themselves to the service of their dear motherland amongst whom some had become martyrs at the altar of India's freedom.

The value of my work becomes further enhanced due to the fact that besides taking into account all the relevant sources to which I got an access, I also interviewed some of the freedom

fighters who are still living and who had played a leading role in Indian struggle for independence. The result of the interviews with those directly connected with the National Movement in the district of Saran, thus forms a valuable supplement to the sources consulted. To mention a few living stalwarts interviewed, there were Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, ex-Chief Minister of Bihar, Mrityunjoy Prasad, eldest son of late Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first President of the Indian Republic, Jaleshwar Prasad, Advocate, Patna High Court, Jaglal Chaudhary, ex-Minister Government of Bihar, Rama Nanda Yadav, General Secretary, Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, Rajbanshi Singh, a valiant freedom fighter of Saran district besides a score of other freedom fighters. They gave me first-hand information about their own contributions to India's struggle for independence.

For the preparation of this work, I have made an exhaustive study of numerous published books, reports of the All India and Provincial (now State) Congress Committees, Government reports and publications of other kinds, journals and newspapers, unpublished records of National Archives of India, New Delhi and the State Archives of Bihar, Patna, and of West Bengal, Calcutta and the Divisional and District Records at Patna, Muzaffarpur, Chapra, Siwan and Gopalganj. Unpublished statements, letters, autobiography and papers of other kinds, collected by me from private sources, have also supplied plenty of important information in connection with the topic of my research.

I spent a considerable part of my time in course of my research work at K.P. Jaiswal Research Institute, Patna, Radhika Sinha Institute, Patna, Central Record Room, Bihar Secretariat, Patna, going through the relevant records in connection with my thesis. I stayed at Calcutta for several months and consulted the files of old newspapers and also a large number of published books in the National Library and Asiatic Society Library there.

I spent some months at Delhi also and there I made use of the unpublished records of the National Archives of India and Indian National Congress Office, New Delhi for relevant information.

*Nagendra Kumar*

# I

## THE REVOLT OF 1857

The year 1857 has been rightly regarded as one of the epoch-making years in the history of Modern India. The remarkable events of 1857 had their repercussions not only on the British Government in England but also on the internal history of India. The revolt of the Indian sepoy at Meerut on 10th May 1857 set ablaze Indian contingent forces at some of the important military centres of northeastern India and Bihar was no exception to it. Of the different districts in the province, the centres of trouble were Gaya, Arrah, Chapra, Motihari and Muzaffarpur.<sup>1</sup>

The news of the outbreak of rebellion amongst the sepoy at Meerut fanned the flames of discontentment in the different regiments in Bihar. The Indian sepoy at Dinapore, Arrah, Gaya, Tirhut and also of Champaran rose in revolt<sup>2</sup> and there was an apprehension that this revolt might spread amongst the Indian masses and, therefore, the British authorities not only of Calcutta and Patna but also of the different districts of Bihar including Saran became quite alarmed and they took effective measures to check the spread of the revolt to other places.<sup>3</sup>

Saran, like other districts of north Bihar, was equally effected by the growing disaffection amongst the Indian sepoy who were in the pay of the British Government. When the Indian



sepoys at Dinapore rose in revolt at that time, Major Holmes was in command of the 12th Irregular Cavalry<sup>4</sup> which was stationed at Sugauli.<sup>5</sup> Major Holmes was a man of foresight and determination and as such he was of firm conviction that the only way to suppress the spread of the trouble was the adoption of a policy of repression. He wrote to the authorities concerned ; "I am determined to keep order in these districts and I will deal with a strong hand".<sup>6</sup> His method was quite simple and very effective. On his own responsibility, he placed the whole country between Patna and Gorakhpore under martial law. Surprisingly enough he enforced discipline and orderliness in this region with the help of native regiments. He sent out his trusted armed men to punish the evil doers and protect the civilians and their hearth and homes. Such great was his awe and so successful was he in striking terror into the hearts of the local people that he soon established perfect peace in the areas under his control. None dared to think anything of rebellion.<sup>7</sup> But this peace was proved to be illusory and short-lived. It was a lull before storm. Unfortunately these strong measures of Major Holmes were not liked by the high officers of the government and they forced him to withdraw these measures.<sup>8</sup> However, there were no signs of disaffection in Saran upto the forenoon of 23rd July, 1857. In fact Indian regiment at Sugauli rose in rebellion in the evening of 23rd July, 1857. This is evident from a letter dated July 25, 1857 from Maharaja Bahadur Rajendra Krishna Singh of Bettiah to C. Beadon, Secretary to the Government of India, that "the *Sewar*, at Sugauli (Sugawlee) having on 23rd instant (July) at 8 o'clock in the night mutineed, murdered Major Holmes and his wife, the Surgeon and his wife and children and then bolted with treasure in their keeping towards Chaprah or Allaganj, Siwan."<sup>9</sup> The District Gazetteer of Champaran further informs us that after brutally murdering Dr. Gardiner, the Surgeon, his wife and children except one who escaped their notice, they reached Siwan where they attacked the house of Messrs Lynch and McDonnel, the Deputy Magistrate and Sub-Deputy Opium Agent respectively and then marched towards Azamgarh.<sup>10</sup> The dead bodies of Major Holmes and Mrs. Holmes were brought to Motihari by the police and those

of Dr. Gardiner and his family were burnt in their bungalows by the fire which was lit by the insurgents.<sup>11</sup> This mutiny of the 12th Irregular Cavalry at Sugauli gave the signal for a serious disturbance in the district. On account of the defenceless position of the district and as the crisis deepened further, the Joint Magistrate, Mr. Raikes left Motihari, which was the headquarters of the district of Champaran and took shelter at a place of safety near Motihari and he looked after the administration of the district from that place.<sup>12</sup> But Mr. Raikes soon returned to Motihari to resume the civil administration of the district. The British officials took prompt steps to deal with the situation. On the 30th July, 1857, martial law was proclaimed by the local Government and soon afterwards Honorary Magistrates were appointed from amongst the Indigo planters who were authorised to raise small troops of policemen for the protection of their families and their immediate neighbours. In spite of this, the situation in Champaran gradually deteriorated and the situation became a little more difficult on account of the incursions of Muhammad Hussain, who was the leader of the Oudh mutineers. His men were also active at Muzaffarpur and Chapra.<sup>13</sup>

The revolt of the 12th Irregular Cavalry at Sugauli created a feeling of consternation in Saran. The apprehension of an outbreak of mutiny in Saran was quite natural in view of the fact that as many as ten thousand sepoys in the employ of the government were native of the district of Saran. Besides, the property valued at a crore of rupees belonging to the Raja of Hathwa in the district of Saran offered an irresistible temptation to the mutineers to rush into Saran for loot and plunder.<sup>14</sup> When the European residents of the district of Saran came to know about the outbreak of mutiny at Sugauli they left Chapra, the district headquarters of Saran, and went to Dinapore, on July 28, 1857.<sup>15</sup> But they did not stay at Dinapore for long. They returned to Chapra on the 12th August 1857 and found everything in an orderly state. They also found the jail and treasury untouched by the rebels and the detachment of the Najibs was quite loyal to the government. Kazi Ramzan Ali contributed very much to the

preservation of peace and order in Chapra, the district headquarters of Saran.<sup>16</sup>

Besides this, the peace was again disturbed for a short time. In the middle of August, 1857, disturbances broke out in village Gangua in Police Station Darauli.<sup>17</sup> The local zamindars of the village raised the standard of revolt. The Sub-Inspector who was incharge of the police station tried to suppress the revolt with the help of his men but he could not succeed. However, the rebel zamindars soon gave in and thus the trouble was over.<sup>18</sup>

But the tranquillity of the headquarters of Saran was disturbed for some time on account of the inroads of Muhammad Hussain who was the leader of Oudh mutineers. In October 1857, 500 rebels entered the district and raided and plundered two factories, one near Darauli belonging to a native named Babu Ram and the other at Gangua which belonged to Mr. McLeod.<sup>19</sup>

The situation in Chapra was pretty serious. To meet this serious situation the government sent a Gurkha regiment together with Captain Sotheby's Naval Brigade to Siwan. Thereafter, the rebels withdrew and from that time onwards no trouble arose.<sup>20</sup> The above facts have been gleaned from the account of the then Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Sir Frederick James Halliday, (1854-59) who observes : "I directed the Commissioner to do the best he could for the defence of the district, making use of the two Gurkha regiments and the Naval Brigade, but for the present to act strictly on the defensive, and I now made an application to the Supreme Government, requesting that European officers should be attached to the Gurkhas. This was immediately accorded, but pending permission, the Brigadier in command at Dinapore, had at the instance of the Commissioner, sent some officers to do duty with force. One of the regiments together with Captain Sotheby's naval brigade was stationed at Siwan, the other at Motihari and subsequently at Bettiah and no further attack was made from the Gorakhpur direction. The 'Jamuna' as has been previously stated, was ordered to enter Gogra river but her commander reported that there was not sufficient water for her. Much later, however,

in the dry weather 'Jamuna' was able to proceed up to river Gogra. For the present she was employed in guarding the Sonapur Ghat during the annual fair. Everything went off quietly at this fair, and Mr. Macleod, purchased a large quantity of drought bullocks and some horses on the part of the Government."<sup>21</sup>

The following narrative of Mr. William Mc-Donnel, Magistrate of Chapra, will explain the situation obtaining in the town of Chapra after the outbreak of the revolt at Sugauli. He writes from Chapra on 3rd September, 1857 "About twelve o'clock that night<sup>22</sup> I got a pencil note, not signed, but written, I saw by Lynch, saying he had escaped from Siwan with his wife and that the cavalry were there. Early in the morning I got a second note saying that the troops had come down the Chuprah road, searching for Lynch and Mc Donnel, the Deputy Opium Agent. About 10 a.m. I heard that the Dinapore mutineers had reached Arrah, and while in Cutchery about three o'clock, a man on a ponny came galloping in saying that the cavalry were within ten miles of Chuprah. I finished the case I was about, and I fear, rather hastily, and then rode home, and Garston and I agreed it was time to bolt, some made a start for it going through the town, and police station, and also the missionaries, to tell them we were going and advising them to do the same. We rode down to Doreeganj about eight miles and saw the smokes of a steamer in the distance, so we waited until she came near. We found Martil and Richardson and a doctor on board with a party of 15th fushiliers, and some thirteen Sikhs and hearing that cavalry were on their way here and the rebels were at Arrah all agreed it would be folly to go back with only thirteen Sikhs, so we got a party of the 5th fushiliers to go with us and we started off for Chuprah, where we reached at 11 p.m. We went to the Collector's and all assisted packing treasure, and we started back for steamer with some 90,000 rupees. If they had left me fifty men I would have stopped at Chuprah but not only with thirteen Sikhs..."<sup>23</sup>

The British authorities were quite alert to the situation which is evident from the letter of the Commissioner of Patna written by him to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal,

forwarded to Secretary to the Government of India on 30th August, 1857. It appears from the Lieutenant Governor that "the districts of those provinces to the north of Ganges are exposed to great danger in consequences of the occupation of Gorakhpore by rebels. The government had not at its disposal any troops with which to oppose the advance of any force into Saran and Champaran, and I am directed therefore to suggest that if his Lordship in Council should see fit, the Resident at Nepal may be moved to procure the march of one thousand Gurkhas to guard Champaran and a like number for the protection of the stations of Chuprah and Muzaffarpur".<sup>24</sup>

In its reply the Secretary to the Government of India wrote on 8th September, 1857 : "the Resident at Nepal has anticipated His Honour's requisition and sent down 1000 Gurkhas to Sugowlee and Moteeharee to enable the magistrate of Champaran to hold the district. The Gurkha left Katmandhoo on the 13th and 14th ultimo. His Lordship hopes that the force will be sufficient to protect the frontier without asking the Durbar for 1000 more troops".<sup>25</sup>

Thus Chapra frontier was also considered to be a dangerous spot by the Company's government. Early in September 1857, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal asked the officer, commanding the detachment of 17th Madras N. I., to proceed at once to the Chapra frontier in order to prevent incursion of the rebels from the side of Gorakhpur. The Commissioner of Patna also communicated necessary instruction to the officer commanding of the 17th Madras N. I. on 6th September, 1857 in which he pointed out to the advisability of his stationing himself at Alleganj, Siwan in order that he might guard the frontier against any inroads from Gorakhpur. Alleganj (Siwan) was only about 22 miles from the Gorakhpur frontier and it was seat of a Deputy Magistrate as well as a Sub-Deputy Opium Agent. The Commissioner also wrote to him that by stationing himself at Alleganj (Siwan) he would have the advantage of having there assistance of two English officers Mr. Mc Donnel and Mr. Lynch who were the Deputy Magistrates at Siwan. Besides this, he would also be able to secure the support of 75 Sikhs of Captain Rattray police battalion.

He was also advised to act in concert with two Gurkha regiments of the Nepal Raj who were then guarding the ghats of the upper Gandak in the Champaran district. He was further advised that in case he required the assistance of the Gurkha regiments, he was to address himself to the Joint Magistrate of Motihari under whose control the Gurkha regiment had been then placed.<sup>26</sup>

In December 1857, another band of rebels came from the direction of Gorakhpore and attacked the outpost of Guthani<sup>27</sup> which was held by a detachment of 55 Sikhs only. On the approach of the rebels these Sikh soldiers fled away without offering any resistance. But very soon re-inforcement came from the Gurkhas and naval brigade but before their arrival the rebels had escaped after burning the abode of the Sikh regiment.<sup>28</sup> Towards the close of the year, Jangbahadur arrived with Nepalese army and on 26th December, 1857, Colonel Roweroft with a force of about one thousand men inflicted a crushing defeat on the rebels who numbered six to seven thousand at a place known as Sohanpore towards the Gorakhpore frontier.<sup>29</sup>

The success of the famous rebel of Jagdishpore at Atrauli<sup>30</sup> (i.e. Babu Kunwar Singh) on 22nd March 1858<sup>31</sup> and the virtual occupation of Azamgarh by this great leader caused much anxiety in the English in Bihar which is evident from the following letter of Mr. A. R. Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, dated 30th March 1858, which was written to the then Lieutenant Governor-General of Bengal :

“There is great alarm at Chupra and Arrah. The Brigadier will not send the two companies to Arrah unless the Sikhs are moved down from Dehri to support them. Colonel Michel objects to the Seikh being moved. The rebels have collected 90 boats on the Gogra and threaten to insist Hutwa (Hathuwa) and the Chuprah, the point of danger seem to be the north of the Arrah district and Chuprah. I think the Seikh should march at once to Arrah whence they and the European could move at once to Chuprah if necessary. It would allay alarm much if I were unable to say what steps the Govt. is taking to disperse the rebels in Azamghur”.<sup>32</sup>

Kunwar Singh, the rebel leader of Shahabad, got wide support from the people of Saran. It is said that he prepared a plan to overthrow the British Government along with other leading personalities of Bihar in Sonapore fair preceding the revolt of 1857.<sup>33</sup> However, it did not materialise. But there is another instance which shows that Kunwar Singh got unstinted support from the people of Saran. From a letter of Mc Donnel, Magistrate of Saran, addressed to the Commissioner of Patna Division dated 18th July, 1858, it appears that when Kunwar Singh along with his men reached the bank of Sheopur Ghat there was only one boat on the bank. A few of his men crossed the river on this boat. But with the assistance of the inhabitants of the locality a number of boats were arranged and the men of Kunwar Singh crossed the river without much difficulty. Mr. Mc Donnel remarked with great surprise that Kunwar Singh could get so many boats at a very short notice because he had numerous friends on the either side of the bank who were willing to render assistance to him".<sup>34</sup>

Kunwar Singh's death on the 26th April 1858 after his eventual victory of 23rd April 1858 proved a source of greater danger to British authorities in Saran. Deprived of his leadership his men became indisciplined, broke into batches of 100 or 200 persons and went on looting, burning, and plundering the country-side. They reduced the eastern Ghazipore district into complete anarchy and the records of 1858 amply bear out the anxiety of the Magistrate to keep Saran unmolested. The District records from June, 1858 onwards show that the Magistrate was constantly appealing to Dinapore for the deputation of a few more companies of British and Sikh troops. Kunwar Singh's men, it appears from the old correspondence, especially attacked the police stations. Several Sub Inspectors of police including the Sub-Inspector of Darauli were waylaid and killed.<sup>35</sup>

In a letter dated the 14th June 1858 the Magistrate of Saran informed the Commissioner of Patna that the police force would be absolutely inadequate to stop the rebels from crossing the river. He requested the Commissioner to call upon the Brigadier, commanding Dinapore Division to send company

**H.M. 35th to occupy Chapra for the time being. He further pointed out that not much hope would be fixed on the Siwan Levy as most of them were partially trained. There was naval brigade cruising on the river near Chapra but this was also a very small military aid.<sup>36</sup>**

**In a letter dated 15, June 1858, the Magistrate Incharge of Saran informed the Commissioner that small band of rebels armed with muskets and bayonets were creating havoc in the vicinity of Raghunathpur Police Chowkee<sup>37</sup> and trying to kill the police. He did not have much reliance on the zamindars and had offered reward of Rs. 500 for the apprehension of the rebels or for bringing in their bodies.**

**The Magistrate Incharge of Saran had called upon the Raja of Hatwa (Hathuwa), Bettiah and other zamindars, to assist in guarding the ghats both public and private. Letter no. 37 dated the 18th February, 1858 from the Magistrate of Saran to the Commissioner of Patna makes it clear that although the strength of the thanas had been increased and he had severely warned the zamindars and called upon them to give help, he was not sure whether he would get any help in case there was an attack from the side of the rebels.<sup>38</sup>**

**The mutineers appeared to be quite vindictive on the 5th October 1858. The Magistrate Incharge of Saran, reported to the Commissioner of Patna Division that one Madhavalal Barkandaz was waylaid and his nose was cut into two and his right hand was chopped off because he was found carrying an important message from the Magistrate. Besides this, the rebels had completely upset the river traffic and plundered several boats which carrild coal, grain and other merchandise<sup>40</sup>.**

**The attitude of the local aristocracy was as usual helpful to the Company's Government. There were two big zamindars in the district of Saran, which then included Champaran also. One was Maharaja Rajendra Bahadur Singh of Bettiah and the other was Maharaja Chatradhari Singh of Hathwa. Both the Maharajas displayed loyalty to the Company's government and they opposed the rebels with all the might that they commanded. Both of them supplied a larg number of soldiers, who tried to**



prevent the mutineers from crossing river Gogra and entering into Champaran and Saran from the side of Gorakhpur. Both of them sent letters to the Company's government assuring them their utmost loyalty and they promised all help to them. In support of the above statement reference may be made to an *Urzee* (petition) from the Maharaja of Hathuwa to the Commissioner of Patna Division dated June 20 1857, which was meant for submission to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. The letter is as follows.

"Understanding that at the instigation of some bad people certain sepoys have expressed their disloyalty to Government and created disturbances in the North Western provinces and that some ryots of Government have rebelled, I voluntarily offer to place my life in the service of Government. In compliance with orders of the local authorities I have sent infantry, horsemen and elephant to the officers...and I have also entertained infantry and troops at my zamindari to prevent the mutineers from coming there."<sup>41</sup>

Besides these two Maharajas, there were large number of individuals who rendered service to the Company's government in suppressing the revolt of 1857. There is a list of persons in National Archives of India, New Delhi, who supported the British Government and were rewarded. The list included the following persons of one district of Saran :<sup>42</sup>

1. Shah Khyrat Hossain<sup>43</sup>
2. Shah Ahmad Hossain
3. Ramzan Ali Gazee
4. Maharaja Rajendra Krishna Bahadur of Bettiah.
5. Maharaja Chutter Dharee Singh of Hathuwa. Both displayed conspicuous loyalties and opposed the rebels. Both the Rajas supplied "Sowars" and footmen to prevent the mutineers from crossing the Gogra and entering Champaran and Saran from Gorakhpur supplied men and provisions.
6. Mohmed Wazid, Munsif of Saran.
7. Daroga of Tajpore-Saran.

8. Enayat Hossain Darogah of Hossapore (Saran).
9. Luchman Sah, Kamar of Barrowly, Saran. This gentleman rendered some service to government and saved the lives of Messrs, Lynch and Mc Donnel.<sup>11</sup>

Thus Saran played an important role in the great revolt of 1857. Not only the Indian Sepoys of Sugauli but also the petty zamindars and other sections of the people rose in rebellion. The importance of Saran in the movement of 1857 was great because it was quite close to Gorakhpur which was an important stronghold of the rebels of 1857. The rebellion in Saran was considered so dangerous by the Company's Government that the Government of Nepal was approached through the British Resident for the deputation of additional gorkha forces into Saran. Contingents of Gurkha forces were despatched to Saran and these played an important part in suppressing the rebellion.

Moreover, Babu Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur, the great hero of 1857, also tried to requisition the services of the local zamindars of Saran district but he did not succeed. However, Saran remained an important stronghold of the insurgents of 1857 and it was a source of great anxieties to the Company's. Officers who took all the necessary precautions and measures for the protection of the district from the attack of the rebels.

### Notes

1. Savarkar, V. D., *The Indian War of Independence 1857*, p. 314.
2. Chattopadhyaya, H.P., *The Sepoy Mutiny of 1857*, p. 130.
3. *Ibid.*
4. O'Malley, L.S.S., *District Gazetteer of Champaran* (1907), p. 33.
5. Sugauli is in the district of Champaran in north Bihar. Champaran was included in Saran till 1866.
6. O'Malley, L.S.S., *District Gazetteer of Champaran*, p. 33.

7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
9. Home Publication Consultation, 7th August, 1857, No. 11 : *District Gazetteer of Champaran*, p. 34.
10. Buckland, C. E., *Bengal Under Lieutenant Governors*. Vol. II, p. 72,
11. O'Malley, L.S.S., *District Gazetteer of Champaran*, p. 34.
12. Home Publication Consultation, 7th August, 1857, No. 12.
13. Chattopadhyaya, H. P., *Sepoy Mutiny of 1857*, p. 131.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Chattopadhyaya, H.P., *Sepoy Mutiny of 1857*, p. 131.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Darauli is about 20 miles from Siwan.
18. Letter from E. A. Samuells, Commissioner of Patna to A. R. Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal dated 22nd August, 1857, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
19. Chaudhary, Roy P.C., *District Gazetteer of Saran* (1960), p. 61.
20. Letter from the Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the Commissioner of Patna, dated 16th October, 1857, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
21. Buckland, C. E., *Bengal Under the Lieutenant Governors*, Vol, I, p. 79.
22. 26th July. 1857.
23. Charles Ball, *History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol, II, pp. 117-118.
24. Foreign Department No. 115-116, dated 25th September, 1857, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
25. Foreign Department No, 117, dated 25th September, 1857, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
26. Dutta, K. K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, p. 42,
27. Guthani is in the Siwan Sub-division of Saran District,
28. Buckland, C. E., *Bengal Under Lieutenant Governors*, Vol, I, p, 81 (second edition).
29. Chaudhary, Roy P. C., *District Gazetteer of Saran*, p, 61.
30. Atrauli is at a distance of about 25 miles from Azamgarh.
31. Malleon, *History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol, II, pp, 456-57.
32. Foreign Department No, 273 K W dated 30th April, 1858, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
33. Chaudhary, Roy P. C., *District Gazetteer of Saran*, p. 64,

34. Chaudhary, Roy P. C., *District Gazetteer of Saran*, p. 65.
35. *Ibid.*
36. Chaudhary, Roy P. C., *District Gazetteer of Saran*, p. 65.
37. Raghunathpur Thana is in Siwan sub-division in north Bihar. It is about 18 miles from Siwan.
38. Chaudhary, Roy P. C., *District Gazetteer of Saran*, pp. 65-66.
39. Chaudhary, Roy P. C., *District Gazetteer of Saran*, p. 66.
40. *Ibid.*
41. Parliamentary Papers, Vol, 44, Part I of 1857-58, Paper No. 364.
42. Foreign Miscellaneous Records, No. 383.
43. The names of supporters of Saran district start from No. 25 in the records of National Archives of India, New Delhi.
44. A Hindu, *The Mutinies and the People*, published by the Bangbasi-Office 38-2, Bhawani Charan Dutt's Street, 1905, p. 254.

## II

### THE INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT (1885 to 1920)

The Indian National Congress owed its origin to many factors—political and economic. The reactionary regime of Lord Lytton (April, 1876 to June 1880) stirred national sentiment to a great degree. The wanton invasion of Kabul followed by the Second-Afghan War, the large increase of the army under the hallucination of the Russian bugbear, the gagging of the vernacular press all these brought about great resentment amongst the people against the British administration.<sup>1</sup> Besides this, various economic troubles among the masses and growing unemployment among the middle classes played their parts in fanning the flame of Indian national discontent. Thus, there was deep dissatisfaction in India against British administration and the need for an all India organisation was greatly felt by the enlightened Indian masses. It was at such a time that Mr. Allan Octavian Hume, a retired member of the Indian Civil Service, felt the need of some action to counteract the growing unrest for the interest of both rulers and ruled. Hence, came the Indian National Congress, and the first session of this Congress was held at Bombay from 25th December, 1885 with Mr. W.C. Bonerjee (Womesh Chandra Bonerjee) as its elected President and with not less than 72 delegates representing different parts of India.<sup>2</sup>

Bihar was associated with the activities of the Indian National Congress from the days of its inception. It is rather strange that though Bihar was united with Bengal it had a separate Provincial Congress Committee which was established in 1906 at Patna, one of its sponsorers being Rajendra Prasad,<sup>3</sup> the proud son of Saran.<sup>4</sup>

Sachchidananda Sinha along with other ardent and eminent publicmen of Bihar felt the need of a separate province of Bihar. With this end in view he set up Bihari Students' Association. The first conference of this Association was held at Patna in 1906, and through the efforts of Rajendra Prasad, a large number of people from the district of Saran attended the conference.<sup>5</sup>

Shri Rajendra Prasad joined the Calcutta Session of the Indian National Congress in 1906 as a volunteer.<sup>6</sup> From 1906 to 1910 though associated with the Congress he did not play any active role. In 1911 he was elected a Congress delegate from Bihar and consequently became a member of the All India Congress Committee and since then his association with the Indian National Congress had been intimate and continuous. Due to his untiring efforts the Congress Movement in Bihar and particularly in Saran district gained momentum<sup>7</sup> and it began to attract the attention of the people.

The year 1905 forms a turning point not only in the history of India but also in the history of Asia as a whole. The effects of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5 shattered the vanity of the white man's superiority, and generated new hopes of liberation in different parts of this continent.<sup>8</sup>

Within the country, Lord Curzon's system of "thorough" characterised by rigorous administrative control, particularly his ill-conceived measures of the partition of Bengal, had intensely excited national feelings, and was largely responsible for the growth of extremism in contemporary Indian politics under the leadership of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal (Bal-Lal-Pal). In absolute defiance of public opinion throughout India against the partition scheme, Lord Curzon, promulgated it in a Government Resolution

dated 19th July 1905, and it became a "settled fact" on the 16th October 1905. The new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam came into existence with Dacca as its capital and Sir Bamfylde Fuller as the Lieutenant Governor. It shocked the public feelings in Bengal and elsewhere and at once evoked strong protest

Rajendra Prasad along with many others felt greatly agitated at the partition of Bengal. He attended a protest meeting at Calcutta on 7th August, 1905. This meeting passed a resolution condemning partition, boycotting foreign goods and supporting Swadeshi Movement.<sup>10</sup>

Mazharul Haque, an adorable figure in the history of modern Bihar and a native of Saran<sup>11</sup> was an ardent nationalist with a record of enormous sacrifices and dauntless struggle for the cause of freedom extending for several years. He was elected as delegate at a meeting of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, held on the 25th December 1910, for the twenty fifth session of Indian National Congress held at Allahabad. There he strongly seconded the resolution which was moved by Mr. M.A. Jinnah against the extension or application of the principle of separate communal electorate to Municipalities, District Boards or other local bodies. "To my mind the question of questions for the present in India", he said, "is to bring the two communities together in order that they work shoulder to shoulder for the regeneration of our motherland."<sup>12</sup>

Braj Kishore Prasad, son of Ram Jivan Lal of village Srinagar, Siwan (Saran)<sup>13</sup> also attended the Allahabad Session of the Congress. He seconded the resolutions on Judicial Reform and Swadeshi Movement.<sup>14</sup>

The year 1912 marked a new epoch in the history of modern Bihar. In this year Bihar was separated from Bengal. Another important event was that the Indian National Congress met at Patna for its twenty-seventh session under the presidency of the Hon'ble Rao Bahadur R.N. Madholkar. The Chairman of the Reception Committee was Mazharul Haque of Saran.<sup>15</sup> Saran contributed a good deal towards making the session a success. It provided a large number of enthusiastic workers amongst whom the most notable were Maulvi Syed

Wazir Hossain and Durga Prasad. Both of them belonged to Chapra.

• The fifth meeting of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee was held at Bankipore on the 10th April, 1914, under the presidentship of Braj Kishore Prasad of Saran.<sup>16</sup>

Now Bihar began to play an active role in the successive phase of Indian nationalism. In 1914 one of the eminent nationalist of Saran Mazharul Haque, along with Sachchidananda Sinha, were elected to serve on a deputation sent to England by the Congress along with Bhupendra Nath Basu, M.A. Jinnah, N.M. Samarth, and Lala Lajpat Rai.<sup>17</sup>

As President of the Bombay Session of the All India Muslim League held in 1914 Mazharul Haque dwelt upon the importance of Hindu-Muslim unity. His speech was greatly appreciated by the contemporary Bihar Press which commented : "by the same breadth of views, the same fearless independence, the same undaunted courage of conviction and the same unselfish patriotism that have ever been the distinguishing features of his public life, Shri Haque emphasised that sincere cordiality between the Hindus and the Muslims was essential for the fulfilment of the cherished national aspirations".<sup>18</sup> The Muslim sentiments in India were also deeply stirred by the British declaration of war against Turkey, particularly since 1916 when the Shariff of Mecca had rebelled against his overlord, the Sultan of Turkey, who was the Khalifa of all the faithfuls and who had in Moslem eyes become England's tool. This facilitated co-operation between the Indian Muslims and the Indian National Congress. Both the Congress and the League held their annual Sessions at Lucknow in December, 1916, and concluded "The Lucknow Pact," according to which the Congress agreed to separate electorate and both the organisations jointly formulated a scheme of reforms, known as the "Congress-League Scheme".<sup>19</sup> Thus, Shri Haque contributed a good deal towards bringing the two major communities of India together and forging a working alliance between them.

The seventh session of the Bihar Provincial Conference was held at Chapra on the 3rd April, 1915 under the presidentship



of Nand Kishore Lal of Gaya. In this conference important political and social issues of the day were discussed and the public attention was drawn to those problems.<sup>20</sup>

The year 1914-18 was critical period in the history of the humanity. The first Great War had its repercussions on India also in various ways. A large number of people from the district of Saran were recruited into the army and were sent to the front to fight with the enemies.<sup>21</sup>

In December 1916, Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee moved the Self-Government Resolution in Lucknow Congress session. In this session Mazharul Haque also commented on the "Self-Government" resolution as follows :

"All my political life, I have been of opinion that our motherland cannot advance without the unity of the Hindus, Mussalmans and other races. Having been of this opinion, I have worked for the attainment of that unity and that unity has been achieved this year in this town of Lucknow. I consider it my duty to mention the name of one who has been the chief instrument in attaining that unity. I mention the name of my revered friend the Raja Saheb of Mahmudabad. I assure you, countrymen, that the Raja Saheb of Mahmudabad, is an asset to India, and I hope there would be many more like him in my country. Brethren, I am of opinion that the time for speechifying and talking has long gone by. The time for action has come (applause). Remember, you are demanding Self-Government and Home Rule for India. Do you for a moment believe that you get it by asking ? (cries of "No-No"). Unless and until, as Mrs. Besant has told you, you make your rulers believe that you are in earnest, and that you are serious in your demands you will never get anything. I am sure of it. So my advice to my countrymen is this : Try to work now. I believe that there is going to be a meeting of the subject committee today and a resolution is going to be placed before you for a machinery which you could work up for the attainment of Self-Government. We must have a propaganda throughout the country and let our rulers see for themselves that every man, every woman, and every child of India is determined to have Self-Government".<sup>22</sup>

**Saran and the Home Rule Movement<sup>13</sup>**

The repercussion of the Home Rule Movement was felt in the different provinces of India and Bihar was not exception to it.<sup>14</sup> A meeting was held in Bankipore, Patna, on the 16th December 1916 in which it was resolved to start a Home Rule League at Bankipore and the office-bearers were elected. Mazharul Haque was elected as the President of the League. He delivered an inspiring speech stressing the need for the formation of the Home Rule League. He observed that Home Rule means Self-Government. "But there are some who say that we are not fit for Self-Government. Let us examine this proposition in a little detail. It is freely said that oriental nations have never been accustomed to Self-Government in their past history and that Home Rule is entirely foreign to the genius of the Asiatic people. I do not know whether these people have ever read the history which they are so fond of quoting but I would recommend to them the history of our own town of Patna, the ancient Patliputra under Ashoka the Great and they will find Self-Government flourishing in its noblest form here. What were the numerous Boards of Patliputra by whom even the comforts of guests and travellers were looked after, if not the highest form of Government obtaining in any country at any time, ancient or modern? All the villages in India had Panchayats which used to decide and settle disputes and litigations all over the country...Gentlemen, the object of our League will be to educate and organise the people and popularise the idea of Self-Government within the length and breadth of our motherland. Our procedure will be certainly constitutional and unobjectionable but the propaganda will be carried on with a perseverance and determination which will lead us to final victory".<sup>15</sup>

It is evident from the letter of L. F. Morshead, Commissioner of Tirhut Division, that Home Rule was quite popular in Saran. (letter no. 671 dated 27th November, 1917 and it was from Sonapur.) It was addressed to H. McPherson, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa, that "village to village Home Rule meetings were being held in the district of Saran".<sup>16</sup>

In a note, addressed to the Chief Secretary, the Lieutenant Governor of Bihar and Orissa dated the 28th November, 1917 observed that "...the Maharani of Hathwa also told me this morning that there is a tendency in Saran for the ryots to withhold their rent because of the unrest caused by Mr. Gandhi and the Home Rule propaganda. It is worth considering whether it would not be well to issue proclamation to ryots enjoying the payment of their lawful rents and pointing out that they will themselves be the sufferers if they withhold payment."<sup>27</sup>

Mahatma Gandhi visited Chapra on the 27th January, 1918, and in this meeting Home Rule badges were sold and subscriptions worth Rs. 800 were collected from the people there.<sup>28</sup>

The District Magistrate, Saran, Mr. F. M. Luce, wrote to the Commissioner of Tirhut Division on the 7th June 1918, that "I have frequently drawn your attention during the last years to the activities of the so called Home Rulers in this district. They consist mainly of a number of second rate pleaders of Chapra Bar, and for some time they have been concentrating their efforts on starting a trouble between the Manager and Raiyats of Mareais".<sup>-9</sup>

Thus Saran was the stronghold of the Home Rulers during the Home Rule League Movement.

### **The Role of Saran in Mahatma Gandhi's Champaran Movement (1917-18)**

The Champaran Movement of Mahatma Gandhi is an event of the utmost significance in the history of our country. It was in Champaran that Mahatma Gandhi for the first time successfully used his famous weapon Ahimsa (non-violence) and satyagraha (non-co-operation) against the European planters for getting the grievances of the peasants redressed after he left South Africa. It was thus a humanitarian crusade which effected emancipation of a large number of peasants from the enormities of a notorious economic system and a great social injustice. The Champaran Movement was also a rehearsal of the great drama which the Mahatma staged in course of three decades (1917-1947) which ended in the complete independence of the country.

Rajendra Prasad rightly observed : "When I look back upon the period that has since elapsed and the work that has since been done in the country I feel as if we are enacting the Champaran drama on a very much vaster scale."<sup>30</sup> Rajendra Prasad, Braj Kishore Narain and Gorakh Prasad all belonging to Saran were in the vanguard of Champaran Movement led by Mahatma Gandhi.<sup>31</sup>

Champaran is a district in the north-western corner of Bihar which was a part of the district of Saran till 1866. Early in the nineteenth century, indigo began to be grown in the district by European planters who in course of time secured, on temporary and permanent leases, large tracts of land from the zamindars of the district, particularly the Maharaja of Bettiah who became involved in heavy debts. The planters, with the influence and status thus acquired, coupled with the influence which they possessed as being members of the ruling race, were soon able to get indigo grown by the tenants of the villages on portions of their holdings varying between 3/20th and 5/20th and later on they regarded this compulsory cultivation as a matter of right, which they got recognised in the Bengal Tenancy Act. This system of growing indigo came to be known as *Tinkathia* or the system of three cottah, i.e. 3/20th of a *bigha*. It was the grievance of the tenants that growing of indigo was not at all profitable for them and that they were forced to do it to the detriment of other cultivation and that the wages that they got for labour were nominal. Their grievances came to a head several times and their risings were suppressed with a heavy hand, but resulted now and then in some increase in the price paid for the indigo by the planter to the cultivator.<sup>32</sup>

It was in this condition of things that Mahatma Gandhi was approached by some representative tenants and Bihar delegates at the time of the Lucknow Congress (December, 1916). At the time of selecting the speakers in the Subjects Committee on the resolution about indigo, the Bihar delegates requested Gandhiji to speak. But Gandhiji did not agree to it as he had till then no personal knowledge of the hardship of the indigo tenants in

Champaran. He said, "I can give no opinion without seeing the conditions with my own eyes. You will please move the resolution in the Congress, but leave me free for the present". On the second day of the meeting of the Congress, Babu Braj Kishore Prasad of village Srinagar, Siwan (Saran) proposed the following resolution before the Congress :

"The Congress most respectfully urges upon the Government the desirability of appointing a mixed committee of officials and non-officials to enquire into the cause of agrarian trouble and the strained relations between the indigo ryots and the European planters in North Bihar and to suggest remedies therefor".<sup>33</sup>

The Congress unanimously passed the said resolution. The Bihari visitors to the session, particularly Raj Kumar Shukla of Champaran, requested Mahatma Gandhi to come to Champaran and study the conditions of the ryots there. Gandhiji promised to visit Champaran at some convenient time.

On the pressing request of Raj Kumar Shukla, on 15th April, 1917 Mahatma Gandhi reached Motihari, the headquarters of Champaran at 3 p.m. and went directly to the residence of Gorakh Prasad.<sup>34</sup> Later on, his house became a *Dharam-shala*,<sup>35</sup> during the Gandhi's mission in Champaran.

In the afternoon of the 18th April, 1917, Mazharul Haque, Rajendra Prasad, Braj Kishore Prasad, and Shambhu Sharan<sup>36</sup> of Saran reached Motihari to help Mahatma Gandhi in his mission.

On 22nd April, 1917, several pleaders from Chapra come to Motihari to assist Mahatma Gandhi in this noble work.<sup>37</sup> The District and Sessions Judge of Saran reported that "Shri Chandradeo Narain, Shri Bikramjit Sahay, Shri Subh Narain, Shri Lachman Prasad, Shri Bindeshwari Prasad, Shri Madan Mohan Sahay and Shri Madho Singh, pleaders of Chapra have gone to see Mr. Gandhi and have subscribed to his work."<sup>38</sup> Besides, these gentlemen several others also including Ram Raksha Brahmachari<sup>39</sup> alias Bachcha Upadhyaya of village Uttim Bangra, Police Station Gopalganj, assisted Mahatma Gandhi.

By the help of some lawyers and a few others, in spite of several hindrances, Mahatma Gandhi was successful in his

mission. The government ultimately appointed a Commission consisting of representatives of landlords, planters, and the government, and Mahatma Gandhi himself who represented the tenants. The Commission after an inquiry submitted a unanimous report practically accepting the complaints of the tenants as valid, and embodying a compromise reducing the enhancements of rent and refunding part of money which the planters had taken from the tenants. The recommendations of the Commission were later on enacted by which, among other things, growing of indigo on 3/20th of land or *Tinkathia* was abolished.<sup>40</sup> The Champaran Movement of Mahatma Gandhi had a great political and social impact on the district of Saran.<sup>41</sup>

#### **The Role of Saran in the Satyagraha of 1919 and the Non-cooperation Movement of 1920**

The Montagu Mission arrived in India on the 10th November, 1917. It put forward a joint scheme of reforms, which was published on the 18th July, 1918, and was ultimately embodied in the Government of India Act, 1919. But these reforms were not adequate to satisfy India's legitimate national demands. To consider these a special session of the Indian National Congress met at Bombay from 29th August to 1st September, 1918, under the presidentship of Syed Hassan Imam of Bihar. It was very largely attended meeting. There was no less than 3,845 delegates from the different parts of India who attended the session. Nineteen delegates from Bihar and Orissa attended it including Chandra Diva (Dip) Narain, Vakil, Chapra, Madhava Sinha, Vakil, Chapra, Mahabir Sharan, Zamindar, Chapra and Rajendra Prasad.<sup>42</sup> After serious discussions for four days, the Congress re-affirmed the principles of Reforms contained in the Congress-League Scheme and declared that nothing less than self-government within the Indian sub-continent would satisfy the legitimate aspiration of the Indian people. It dealt with the Montagu proposals at great length. It declared that the people of India were fit to shoulder responsible government and repudiated the assumption to the contrary contained in the Report. It asked for simultaneous constitutional advance both

in the provinces and the Centre and disagreed with the formula that the provinces are the domain in which the earlier steps should be taken towards the progressive realisation of responsible government leaving the authority of the Government of India in essential matters indisputable, pending experience in the provinces. It also decided to send a Congress deputation to England to press the views of the Congress before the British Government.<sup>43</sup>

The agitation in Bihar against the Rowlatt Bill began at the close of February, 1919 and in March protest meetings, attended by all classes of people, were held in the important places of the province including Chapra,<sup>44</sup> the headquarters of Saran. The decision to participate in the *hartal* on the 6th April, was taken at a meeting held at the Qila Maidan, Patna City on the 4th April under the presidentship of Mazharul Haque. A large number of persons were present in the meeting including Rajendra Prasad. On the 6th April 1919 in response to the calls of Bihar leaders, demonstrations took place and *hartals* were observed throughout Saran district. Shops were closed. A mammoth meeting was held to the east of the Rajput School, Chapra on that day (i.e., 6th April 1919) from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. in which eight persons delivered spirited lectures. On the morning of 7th April at about 10 o'clock a procession paraded the Chapra town carrying two black flags and shouting *Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai*.<sup>45</sup>

On the 10th April 1919 Mahatma Gandhi was arrested at Palwal Station about forty miles from Delhi and put in a train for Bombay under police escorts. As soon as Gandhiji reached Bombay he was set free, but the news of his arrest had roused the people to a pitch of mad frenzy. Then came the Jallianwalla Bagh Tragedy and the proclamation of martial law in the Punjab by its Lieutenant-Governor, Michael O'Dwyer. The news of Mahatma Gandhi's arrest roused sentiment in Bihar. On the evening of 11th April under the presidentship of Hassan Imam a meeting was held in Patna in which the Satyagraha vow of Mahatma Gandhi was explained. A registration office was opened at the house of Rajendra Prasad at Patna for those who intended to take this vow. According to the government

list of *satyagrahis* corrected up to 15th April, 1919, the following belonged to Saran district :

- • 1. Pandit Jivananda Sharma
2. Pandit Balgovind Malviya
3. Muhammad Khurshid Hossain
4. Khan Bahadur Sarfaraz Hossain Khan.<sup>46</sup>

### **Saran and the Khilafat Agitation**

Early in 1920 the Indian Muslims started a vigorous agitation to bring pressure upon British Government to change her policy towards Turkey. The success of this movement known as Khilafat Movement, was assured by the large measure of sympathy and support which the Muslims received from Mahatma Gandhi.<sup>47</sup> Mazharul Haque while addressing a meeting at Chapra on the 5th May, 1920, emphasized the importance of the Hindu-Muslim unity. Referring to the Khilafat Movement he described the conduct of the British Government as highly treacherous and pointed out that like a thief it had stolen Mesopotamia for herself, and distributed large portions of the Turkish Empire to others. He also advised to boycott the British goods.<sup>48</sup>

### **Non-cooperation Movement**

On the 28th July, 1920, Mahatma Gandhi announced that he would start Non-cooperation Movement against the British Government from the 1st of August 1920. In response to his call on 1st August 1920, the shops were closed and business suspended at Chapra and the entire town wore a solemn and grave appearance. In the afternoon people of all castes and creeds assembled in the mosque at Dahiawan under the presidentship of Maulana Hakim Hadi Raza. After recitations from the Koran, stirring speeches were delivered by Maulvi Syed Saleh Hossain, Pandit Mahadeo Saran Pandey and Zakaria Hashmi. The Non-cooperation resolution was unanimously passed. A forceful appeal was made by Mr. Zakaria Hashmi for funds. Amidst deafening applauses it was announced that Zaibun Begum (Mrs. Ali Akbar), a Muslim lady of culture and high education, had presented a pair of beautiful gold bangles



towards the fulfilment of this noble object.<sup>49</sup>

At the special session of the Congress held in Calcutta from the 4th to 9th September 1920, resolution regarding the Non-cooperation Movement was passed. The chief ingredients of the Movement were as follows :

- (a) Surrender of titles and honorary offices and resignation from nominated seats in local bodies.
- (b) Refusal to attend government levies, *durbars*, and other official and semi-official functions held by government officials, or in their honour.
- (c) Gradual withdrawal of children from schools and colleges owned, aided or controlled by government, and in place of such schools and colleges, the establishment of national schools and colleges in the various provinces.
- (d) Gradual boycott of British Courts by the lawyers and litigants, and the establishment of private arbitration courts by their aid for the settlement of private disputes.
- (e) Refusal on the part of the military, clerical and labouring classes to offer themselves as recruits for service in Mesopotamia.
- (f) Withdrawal by candidates of their candidature for election to the Reformed Councils, and refusal on the part of the voters to vote for any candidate who, may, despite the Congress advice, offer himself for election.
- (g) Boycott of foreign goods".<sup>50</sup>

The district of Saran took a leading part in the Non-cooperation Movement launched by the Indian National Congress. Mazharul Haque addressed the following letter to the Editor of the *Searchlight*, withdrawing his candidature from the Council election :

"It is the duty of every Congressman to obey the mandates of the Congress. The Congress has remarkably adopted a policy of Non-cooperation with the government in all its aspects. Similar resolutions have been passed in the Khilafat Conference and the Muslim League. The first and the foremost duty is

that all those who have stood as candidates for the election as members of the different Councils in the country should withdraw their candidature. I had asked for the suffrage of the Mosalmans of Saran district. In obedience to the resolution of these bodies I withdraw my candidature and refuse to take any part in the elections. I as a Musalman can never co-operate with a government which is bent upon destroying Islam. As an Indian I cannot work with a government whose hands are stained with the blood of my countrymen of the Punjab. As long as their grievances remain unremedied co-operation is simply out of question." He further wrote :

"Through the column of your esteemed paper I beg to thank numerous friends who were working with me to make my election a success. Now my advice to all the voters of the province is that they should refuse to give their votes to such men who intend to flout the resolutions of the Congress and co-operate with a cruel and irreligious government".<sup>51</sup>

A letter of Braj Kishore Prasad was published in the *Searchlight* on the 29th September, 1920 which shows that the following gentlemen of the district of Saran had withdrawn their candidatures from the ensuing elections to the Reformed Council from various constituencies in the province :<sup>52</sup>

<i>Home District</i>	<i>Candidates</i>	<i>Constituencies</i>
Saran	Rajendra Prasad, Vakil	North Champaran (Bettiah)
Saran	Gorakh Prasad, Vakil	South Champaran (Motihari)
Saran	Chandradeva Narayan, Vakil	North Chapra (Siwan-Gopalganj)
Saran	Bankey Bihari Lal, Vakil	North Chapra (Siwan-Gopalganj)
Saran	Braj Kishore Prasad	Tirhut urban area.

Though elections were boycotted still the people of Saran continued to take interest in the political activities of the district. On the occasion of the tenth anniversary meeting of the Nava Yuwak Samaj at Aphaar in the district of Saran held on the 23rd October 1920, Gorakh Prasad in his presidential

speech dealt with the following problem : "Desh Ki Adhunik Dasha Aur Ham Logo Ke Kartavya" (i.e. the present condition of the country and our duties). He also thoroughly explained to the audience the meaning of non-cooperation and asked the people to use *swadeshi* goods. He also requested the voters not to vote for anybody who is a candidate for the Council election.<sup>53</sup>

On the 8th November 1920 a meeting of the *Swarajya Sabha* was held under the presidentship of Maulvi Wazir Hussain, Vakil at Jamo Bazar (Saran) where more than three thousand people assembled. Pandit Chandrika Sharma gave an elaborate speech in which he dwelt at length on the collapse of the indigenous industries and exploitation of India by the Britishers and suggested the adoption of *swadeshi* as the only means for the restoration of the former industrial greatness. Kamleshwari Sinha dwelt on the necessity of the establishment of panchayat system. In this meeting, Narain Prasad Sinha advocated for encouraging and supporting the Non-cooperation Movement.<sup>54</sup>

On the 14th November 1920 at Kashdewuraun Bangra (Saran), a largely attended meeting was held under the presidentship of Chandrika Prasad Singh in which a local leader, Pandit Chandrika Sharma, described the condition of India in olden times and the changes that were brought during the time of the British. A passionate appeal was made by another local leader, Kamleshwari Sinha for the organisation of *panchayat* System, for the amelioration of the pitiable condition of the villagers caused by their habits of incessant litigations. Narain Prasad Sinha appealed for the use of *swadeshi* articles. Voters were also asked to boycott the Council Election.<sup>55</sup>

On the 17th November, 1920, a meeting was held in Siwan, in the compound of Purana Killa Maidan, under the presidentship of Vaidyaji, the leader of the local Arya Samaj. On this occasion Mazharul Haque spoke for an hour in which he dealt mainly with the different aspects of the Non-cooperation. He exhorted the students to abstain from schools and asked the members of the Council to boycott attending the Councils and the servicemen to abstain doing any government job.<sup>56</sup>

On the 18th November, 1920, great sensation was created in Siwan town, when a letter was received from Jagarnath Prasad, the son of Bacho Lal, Mokhtar, intimating that the former had become a non-cooperator and he had taken the vow of using *swadeshi* articles throughout his life. Shri Prasad was a student of Benaras Hindu University.<sup>57</sup>

The students of Chapra town went on strike and refused to attend their schools. Mass meeting were held every day since 20th November, 1920 in which local leaders exhorted the audience to make non-cooperation a success.<sup>58</sup>

On the 20th November a public meeting was held at Maharajganj (Siwan) under the presidentship of Jaleshwar Prasad, in which a local leader, Narayan Prasad, fully explained the importance of *Swarajya* and Non-cooperation Movement. Pandit Chandrika Sharma spoke elaborately on the significance of the use of *swadeshi* for two hours.<sup>59</sup>

On the 25th November 1920, a meeting of the students of Siwan, high schools was held at the local Dharamshala in which many students supported the Non-cooperation policy of Mahatma Gandhi.<sup>60</sup>

On the 30th November, 1920, a meeting of the student of V.M.H.E. School, Siwan, was held under the presidentship of a student of class IX in the New Dharamshala (Siwan) which lasted from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. In this meeting a Non-cooperation Committee was formed to make the movement a success.<sup>61</sup>

On the occasion of 'Kartik Purnima Mela' in 1920 a meeting was addressed by Rajendra Prasad at Darauli in which he explained the significance of non-cooperation.<sup>62</sup>

In the month of November, 1920, Council elections were held. In Saran, from the urban non-Mohammedan constituency only 8 exercised their franchise out of an electorate of more than 400. In the Mohammeden urban constituency 9 voted out of about 200. In the election for Council of State only 5 persons exercised their franchise out of 29. In Maharajganj, Ekma and Masarakh no voter turned for voting while in

Barharia and Mairwa voting was less than 20% and that of Darauli and Guthani it was less than 10%.<sup>63</sup>

On the 6th December 1920, Mahatma Gandhi paid a visit to Chapra town—the headquarters of Saran. A mammoth meeting was held in the evening on the Collegiate School grounds. Prominent persons of Saran were present. Gandhiji was highly pleased to note that Zakaria Hashmi and Bindeshwari Prasad had given up their practice at the bar and he congratulated them for it. He stressed on the use of *swadeshi* goods. He observed : “I want Ramraj. But side by side I do not like that the zamindars should tyrannise the peasants. If the zamindars tyrannise them they had a right to resort non-cooperation against them. At the present we have to non-cooperate with the government and hence we should not think over non-co operation against each other”.<sup>64</sup>

Rajendra Prasad addressed a letter to the Vice-Chancellor of Patna University resigning his membership of the Patna University Senate and Syndicate and various other University bodies and committees. In his resignation letter he wrote :

“In view of the serious situation existing in the country on account of unjust action taken by the Government in matters of Khilafat and the inhuman atrocities committed by its officers and agents in the Panjab, the great National Assembly of India have decided to withdraw co-operation from it. Accepting that decision as binding upon me and being fully convinced of the essentially unjust and immoral basis of the Government which can condone such wrongs, I have no option left to me but to give up all concern with the Government and its institutions in so far as it has been enjoined upon us by the National Assembly”.<sup>65</sup>

Rajendra Prasad also resigned his membership from the governing body of the Bihar National College (B.N. College, Patna). He sent his resignation to Principal D.N. Sen in which he wrote :

“Please accept my resignation of my membership of the Council of the Bihar National College. You may not be unaware of the reason which compels me to take this step. So

long as your Council is not in a position to ask for withdrawal of government grant and affiliation with a government university, I fear I cannot associate myself with the management of the institution. I confess I cannot hope that the Council could be willing, constituted as it is at present, to transfer the institution to the *Swaraj Sabha* and thus save the province from the disgrace of having to hand over a partially national institution to the government".<sup>66</sup>

Jagat Narain,<sup>67</sup> a laboratory assistant of the Patna College, resigned from his post on the 3rd December, 1920.<sup>68</sup>

At Gopalganj, on the 20th December 1920 a public meeting was organised under the presidentship of Chandragokul Prasad, pleader, which was attended by several important persons including Rajendra Prasad, Vindeshwari Prasad, Mahendra Prasad, and Rama Nand Sinha. Chandragokul Prasad also contributed Rs. 100 to the National College. A *Swaraj Sabha* was formed there with the following members :

1. Chandragokul Prasad, Pleader
2. Sukhdeo Narain Verma
3. Lachmi Prasad, Mokhtar
4. Ganesh Prasad
5. Raibahoran Sinha
6. Jagannath Prasad, Teacher
7. Indrashan Prasad.<sup>69</sup>

In this meeting a national song composed by Hafiz of Madhopur Badharia was recited by two of his disciples.<sup>70</sup>

Thus, Saran remained in the vanguard of the Non-cooperation Movement that was launched by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920. Most of the students of Saran district struck from schools, some of the lawyers of the district gave up their practices, some of the service-holders resigned from the services. People also boycotted the Council election. It definitely shows that national feeling was gradually growing amongst the people of Saran. Besides, two ardent patriots of Saran, Mazharul Haque and Rajendra Prasad had emerged as great national leaders of the country. Moreover, this period is also characterised by Hindu-Muslim unity on political plain.

## Notes

1. Datta, K. K., *Renaissance, Nationalism and Social Changes in Modern India*, pp. 12-13.
2. Datta, K.K., *Renaissance, Nationalism and Social Changes in Modern India*, p. 17.
3. Rajendra Prasad belonged to village Ziradei in the district of Saran (After the division of Saran into three districts Ziradei now falls under the jurisdiction of the district of Siwan).
4. *Saran District Gazetteer*, p. 71.
5. *Saran District Gazetteer*, p. 70
6. Prasad, Rajendra, *Atmakatha*, 1947, p. 57.
7. *Saran District Gazetteer*, p. 71.
8. Datta K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, p. 107.
9. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, pp. 108-109.
10. Prasad, Rajendra, *Atmakatha*, p. 43.
11. Mazharul Haque was the son of Saikh Ahmmad Ullah of village Bahpura, P. S. Maner, District Patna. Later on he purchased some landed property in village Faridpur of Saran district and settled there.
12. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. 1, pp. 153-144.
13. He was a leading Vakil at Darbhanga.
14. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, p. 154.  
Mazumdar, B. B. & Mazumdar, B. P., *Congress and Congressmen*, p. 359.
15. Mazumdar, B. B. and Mazumdar, B. P., *Congress and Congressmen*, p. 305.
16. File No. 179 of 1914, Political (Special) Department, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
17. File No. 729 of 1917, Bihar Political Department (Special). Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, p. 156. Diwakar, R.R., *Bihar Through the Ages*, p. 652.
18. *The Express*, January 5, 1916, similar appreciation was also expressed in the *Mithila Mihir*, January 8, 1916 and the *Hindi Bihari*, January 12, 1916.
19. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, p. 159.
20. *The Leader*, April 7, 1915. Mishra, B.B., *Mahatma Gandhi's Movement in Champaran*, p. 568.

21. *District Gazetteer of Saran*, p. 73.
22. Report of the thirty first Indian National Congress, 1916, pp. 83-86.
23. Annie Besant inaugurated a Home Rule League at Madras in September, 1916. Earlier, Lokmanya Tilak had established another Home Rule League at Poona in April, 1916 (Datta, K.K., *Renaissance, Nationalism and Social Changes in Modern India*, p. 40).
24. Bihar and Orissa Police Abstract of Intelligence, 1917, dated 6th January, 1917.
25. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, Appendix VIII, p 532 ff.
26. File No. 1571 of 1917, Part II, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
27. *Ibid.*
28. Bihar and Orissa Police Abstract of Intelligence dated the 16th February 1918, para 174.
29. Muzaffarpur Records.
30. Prasad. R.N., The Champaran Mission of Mahatma Gandhi. The *Searchlight* Supplement, dated October 2, 1969.
31. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, p. 138.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Report of the Thirty-first Indian National Congress, p. 68.
34. Prasad, Rajendra, *Champaran Mein Mahatma Gandhi*, 1965, p. 87. Gorakh Prasad was the youngest son of Akhaibat Lal of village Aphar, district Saran. He was a Vakil in Motihari Court.
35. Gandhi, M.K., *Atmakatha*, Sasta Sahitya Mandal Prakashan, New Delhi, 1970, p. 379.
36. Shambhu Sharan was born in 1892 and a resident of village Sitabdeara in the district of Saran. He was married to Sundari Devi of Benares, sister of Lal Bahadur Shastri, late Prime Minister of India.
37. Prasad, Rajendra, *Champaran Mein Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 119.
38. Extract from the confidential diary of the Superintendent of Police Saran, dated 22nd May, 1917.
39. Mishra, B.B., *Mahatma Gandhi's Movement in Champaran*, p 578.
40. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, p. 140.
41. *District Gazetteer of Saran*, p. 73.
42. Dutta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, pp. 552-553.



43. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabyi, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, pp. 153-154.
44. Bihar and Orissa Police Abstract of Intelligence, 1919. *The Non-Cooperation and Khilafat Movement in Bihar & Orissa*, Printed by the Government of Bihar and Orissa in 1925.
45. File No 57, paper relating to Freedom Movement, Bihar State Central Record Room.
46. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, p. 295.
47. Majumdar, R.C., *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, p. 55.
48. File No. 94, July, 1920, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
49. *The Searchlight*, August 6, 1920.
50. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, pp 200-203.
51. *The Searchlight*, September 19, 1920.
52. *Ibid*, September 29, 1920.
53. *Ibid.*, November 17, 1920.
54. *Ibid*.
55. *Ibid*, November 26, 1920.
56. *Ibid*, November 24, 1920.
57. *Ibid*.
58. *Ibid*, November 26, 1920.
59. *Ibid.*, December 1, 1920.
60. *Ibid.*, December 3, 1920.
61. *Ibid.*, December 5, 1920.
62. Prasad, Rajendra, *Atmakatha*, p. 128.
63. *The Searchlight*, December 8, 1920.
64. Datta, K.K., *Gandhiji in Bihar*, p. 73. *The Searchlight*, December 10, 1920.
65. *The Searchlight*, December 8, 1920.
66. *Ibid*, December 8, 1920.
67. Jagat Narain Belonged to village Done, Police Station Daruali, district Saran.
68. Appendix—I
69. Last two gentlemen were teachers of the local high school. They resigned their post and joined the Non-cooperation Movement.
70. *The Searchlight*, December 31, 1920.

# 3

## SARAN AND THE INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT FROM 1921 TO 1929

According to Subhash Chandra Bose, "the year 1921 undoubtedly gave the country a highly organized party organization. Before that the Congress was a constitutional party and mainly a talking body. The Mahatma not only gave it a constitution and a nationwide basis, but what is more important converted it into a revolutionary organization. Uniform slogans were repeated everywhere and uniform policy and ideology gained currency from one end of India to the other. The English language lost its importance and the Congress adopted Hindi as the *lingua franca* for the whole country. *Khadi* became the official uniform for all Congressmen."<sup>1</sup>

Thus the year 1921 was a turning point in the history of the Indian National Movement. It was the dawn of a new era known as "Gandhian Era" since the Mahatma dominated the political scene of the country and this domination continued till the year of India's independence i.e. 1947 A.D. The first phase of this era lasted from 1921 to 1929. During this period the district of Saran played a vital role in the struggle for India's independence.

The 35th session of the Indian National Congress was held at Nagpur in December, 1920.<sup>2</sup> It ratified the resolution of the

**Calcutta Session on Non-cooperation.** The Nagpur Session of the Indian National Congress really proved to be an extremely important session. The old feelings of impotent rage and importunate requests gave place to a new sense of responsibility and a spirit of self reliance. People realized that if they wished to be free they must strike the blow themselves. It was a definite call to them to cross the Rubicon and burn their boats. They cheerfully agreed to the course and began to march forward. The Nagpur Congress laid a heavy duty upon the nation, and the All India Congress Committee under the advice of the Congress Working Committee, set itself seriously to fulfil this task.<sup>3</sup> The Bihar delegates who returned from the Nagpur Congress session were filled with new enthusiasm and vigour.

Under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi, who toured Bihar in the closing year of 1920, and beginning of 1921 some national schools were started here and some existing schools were converted into national schools by repudiation of affiliation to university and by refusing to accept grants-in-aid from government.<sup>4</sup>

The Duke of Connaught, uncle of King George, who had been sent to India to assuage the resentment of the people, came to Patna on the 6th February 1921,<sup>5</sup> and performed the formal opening ceremony of the National College (already started) and of the Vidyapith. The Bihar Vidyapith was "to co-ordinate the activities of all the national institutions that were springing up in the province and to control and guide them".<sup>6</sup> Mazharul Haque became Chancellor and Braj Kishore Prasad was appointed as Vice-chancellor of the Vidyapith and Rajendra Prasad became the Principal of the National College.<sup>7</sup> It was a matter of pride for the people of Saran that all these three patriots, who were entrusted with the task of manning Bihar Vidyapith, belonged to the district of Saran.

In Saran, the Chapra Collegiate School was converted into a national school and it was controlled on purely national lines.<sup>8</sup>

Educated people of Saran heard the clarion call of Mahatma Gandhi, and left their services and joined the national school.

Till the middle of March, 1921, the following joined the national school.<sup>9</sup>

- 1. Jagat Narain, Demonstrator, Patna College<sup>10</sup>
- 2. Nazir Ahmad, Teacher, Zila School, Chapra
- 3. Jaleshwar Prasad, Lecturer, B.N. College<sup>11</sup>

National schools were also established at Siwan and Gopalganj in the district of Saran.

### **Rules of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee**

In pursuance of a clause in the Resolution on Non-cooperation passed at the Nagpur Congress, the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee drafted the following rules which were approved by Mahatma Gandhi :<sup>12</sup>

“The Provincial Committee will in future control propaganda in the Mufussil. District Committees will act on receipt of instructions from the Provincial Congress Committee who will be advised by a sub-committee to be called ‘the Organisation Committee’ ”.

In consultation with Mahatma Gandhi, the Organisation Committee appointed some leaders for the Movement in their respective areas. Maulvi Zakaria Hashmi was appointed as the District Organiser for Saran. This appointment had the approval of Mahatma Gandhi.

In pursuance of the resolution of the special session of the Indian National Congress at Calcutta (September 1920) which was duly endorsed and approved by the Nagpur Session of the Indian National Congress (December 1920), the Non-Cooperation Movement was in full swing throughout India in the early months of 1921. The District of Saran was equally affected by this movement and instances of breaking the laws and disobeying the government officials were frequent.

On the 5th February 1921, Mr. E.O. Lee, the Sub-Divisional Officer of Sitamarhi served a notice under section 144 Cr P. C. on Brahmachari Ramrakshya, son of Mathura Pandey of village Uttim Bangra, police station Gopalganj, who had addressed a meeting on the 4th February, forbidding him to “make any speech whatever to any gathering of five or more persons in any

part of Sitamarhi sub-division of Muzaffarpur District in any open place during the period of one month from the day of the order".<sup>13</sup>

On the 14th February 1921, Mr. M. G. Hallet, Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa, Ministry of Local-Self Government, had issued the following circular regarding the members and officials of the District Boards and Municipalities supplementing the instructions contained in another circular, dated [the 31st January 1921—"I am directed by the Government of Bihar and Orissa in the Ministry of Local Self-Government to communicate to you their suggestions as to the action which should be taken against the Non-Cooperation Movement by District Boards and Municipalities.

"Municipalities and District Boards are an integral part of the general administration of the province. It is the duty of the office-bearers and members of these institutions to refrain from any act which might be construed as supporting the Non-Cooperation Movement which denounces co-operation in any form with the existing system of administration. Mere presence of persons who have a share, however, small in the administration of Municipalities and District Boards at meetings meant to advance the cause of Non-cooperation, is likely to be construed into sympathy with the object of the Movement as these meetings are attended by the ignorant masses.

"Much stress laid on the avowed non-violent character of the movement by the apologists of the propaganda, but it must be remembered that the work of propaganda is carried on by the volunteers over whom the author of the political movement has no control, and who carry on the work of propagation without having any direct instructions from the author of it. It is most likely that this occasion will be used by a class of men, who are to be found in the population of every country, to indulge in their habitual lawless propensity. Political teachings undergo transformation during propagation and these transformations are beyond the control of the authors of these teachings. An instance of this will be found in Mahatma Gandhi's *Satyagraha* movement. He admitted his teachings had been misunderstood by the people and produced results entirely different from what he had desired.

"The Chairman of District Boards and Municipalities are requested to report through the usual channel what measures they have adopted to give effect to the suggestions of Government".<sup>14</sup>

Rajendra Prasad strongly protested against the above circular and sent the following message to the Editor of the *Searchlight* from Hazaribagh on 20th March 1921 for publication :

"The Government of Bihar and Orissa have thought fit to issue yet another circular. It is addressed to the Chairmen of the District Boards and Municipalities. It assumes that the Municipalities and District Boards are 'an integral part of the general administration of the Province', and proceeds to point out to them 'the duty of the office-bearers and members of these institutions to refrain from any act which might be construed as supporting the Non-cooperation Movement which denounces co-operations in any form with the existing system of administration'. The circular further assumed that members of Municipalities and District Boards are practically on the same footing as Government servants and lays down for them same rule of conduct towards Non-cooperation as for its own paid servants. It is of course a preposterous claim to regard elected and nominated non-official members of District Boards and Municipalities as Government servants and it is beyond the authority of the Government to lay down for them any rule of conduct in their individual capacity. It is not open to the Government to lay down rules of conduct even for the paid servants of the District Boards and Municipalities. The next step probably will be to tell the members of the various legislative bodies not to do anything which might be construed as supporting the N. C. O.\* If a member of the Municipality becomes the member of a Panchayat or of a Committee of Management of National School or a member of Congress Committee in his district, his conduct becomes open to censure under this latest circular of the Government of Bihar and Orissa. Where is the sympathy of the Government with the constructive part of the Non-cooperation Movement of which some people talk in their simplicity? The thing is that the Government recognises that there is a very serious struggle between them and the Non-

cooperation Movement, and the latter has to be crushed in any and every possible way. If our municipal councillors and members of the District Boards have self-respect and regard their own liberty of action as of any value, they ought to disregard this circular and not only continue to attend N. C. O. meetings, but also continue to take such active interest in it they may have been taking..."<sup>15</sup>

Raisaheb Mahendra Prasad (elder brother of Rajendra Prasad), Vice-Chairman, Chapra Municipality, member, Saran District Board and Honorary Magistrate, relinquished his title of 'Raisaheb' and resigned from Honorary Magistrateship, as a protest against the circular, issued by Mr. M. G. Hallet, Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa, noted above. But he refused to resign from the Vice-Chairmanship of the Chapra Municipality on the plea that he had been elected by the people.<sup>16</sup>

The Non-cooperators were also active in Kateyan police station of the Saran district. An incident occurred in the said police station on the 18th February 1921. It appears from a letter dated 21st February 1921, (D. O. N. 20/P) from the Commissioner of Tirhut Division which was addressed to the Hon'ble Mr. G. Rainy, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa, that a woman, who was fined by one of the Non-cooperator *Panchs* refused to pay and was accordingly tarred and feathered.<sup>17</sup> She filed a case in the police station and this matter was enquired into by the Sub-Inspector of Police, Kateyan. From a letter dated the 20th February 1921, from Mr. E.A.O. Parkin, Superintendent of Police, Saran, to Mr. H.T.S. Forest, Commissioner, Tirhut Division, it is evident that on the 18th February the Sub-Inspector of Police, Kateyan, went out to enquire into the said case. Shortly after his arrival he was surrounded by a mob, variously estimated from 1,000 to 5,000 who wanted him to shout "Gandhi Ki Jai" and "Swaraj has come". On his not complying, the Police party was attacked and most of them were injured though not very seriously. The Sub-Divisional Officer, Gopalganj, was approached and he went out at once with the Inspector of Police, the Sub-Inspector of Police, Mirganj, and four Constables armed with muskets to

the troubled spot and brought the situation under control. An F.I.R. was recorded during the night u/s 148, 149, 332, 333, 353 and 379 I.P.C.<sup>18</sup>

This matter also figured in the Bihar Legislative Council. Maulvi Saiyid Mubarak Ali, Member of Legislative Council, asked the following questions in the Council about the incident at Kateyan, viz.<sup>19</sup>

### *Questions*

1. Will the Government be pleased to state in connection with the trouble recently reported from the jurisdiction of Kateyan P.S. in Gopalganj sub-division of Saran—
  - (a) The nature of the trouble that arose between the police and the people and the causes that led to the same.
  - (b) How did the District Officer, the Superintendent of Police and the Military Police manage to quiet down the situation and after what efforts, peaceful and otherwise.
  - (c) Whether Babu Rajendra Prasad, B.L. rendered any, and if so, what assistance to bring about a peaceful surrender to the wishes of the executive, and
  - (d) How the question has ultimately ended and at what cost in travelling and halting charges paid to the officers and the military who visited the place and the police station?

### *Answer*

1. (a) The nature of the trouble reported from Kateyan will appear from the two first informations, copies of which are laid on the table.
  - (b) A detachment of the district and armed police were sent out from Chapra on the 19th February, and the District Magistrate himself went to Kateyan on the 20th. He did not go to the village of Deoria where the occurrence is said to have taken place, having been detained at Siripur by other important business. The Divisional Inspector of Police accompanied by a Sub-Inspector of Police



visited the scene of the occurrence on the evening of the 19th and the morning of the 20th and made enquiries. On both occasions he saw crowds collecting and shouting. On the 21st the Deputy Superintendent of Police went to the village with the armed police and found it deserted. The armed police were kept on the road and did not enter the village. They were sent back to Chapra on the 22nd. The Superintendent of Police was disabled by an injury and could not leave Chapra. No military police was employed.

- (c) When the Deputy Superintendent of Police was at the village on the 21st, Babu Rajendra Prasad, Babu Narain Prasad, and Babu Bindeswari Prasad arrived in a motor car. Babu Bindeswari Prasad undertook to produce the accused before the Deputy Superintendent the next day. He did not, however, return to Deoria until the 24th and the District Magistrate believes the accused were not produced until the 28th. It does not appear that Babu Rajendra Prasad took any action apart excepting accompanying Babu Bindeswari Prasad to the village.
- (d) The question will be answered when the Court have come to a decision on the charges made. Government have no information as to the travelling and halting charges.<sup>20</sup>

When in the connection of the said case, five persons headed by Maulvi Muhammad Shafi of Muzaffarpur asked permission to enter the jail to interview the prisoners, Mr. H.T.S. Forest, Commissioner of Tirhut Division, wrote a D.O. letter to Mr. G. Rainy, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa, on the 1st of April 1921, soliciting orders of the government on the following points :

“Whether a committee appointed by the Provincial Congress should be allowed to enter a jail in order to make general enquiries from undertrial prisoners into the truth of a case pending before courts”.

In his reply, Mr. Rainy wrote from Ranchi, on the 15th May, 1921 viz.

“Any application presented by a committee of the Congress for admission to jail in order to interview undertrial prisoners should be dealt with exactly as if it were an application from several private persons. If the prisoners or any of them desire to see one or more of the members of the committee as friends or as legal advisers, the fact that the persons asked for members of a Congress committee need not be bar to their admission. But the committee as such has no locus standi whatever and an application made on the ground given by Muhammad Safi in the case, you refer to, should be refused”.<sup>21</sup>

The working Committee of the All India Congress Committee met at Bezwada (Tamil Nadu) on the 31st March and 1st April, 1921<sup>22</sup> in which the government's repressive policy was criticized as “totally unwarranted by the situation in the country”. This Committee was however, of opinion that “apart from the fact that Civil Disobedience is not expressly comprised in the Congress resolution in relation to Non-cooperation, the country is not yet sufficiently disciplined, organized and ripe for the immediate taking up of Civil Disobedience”, advised by way of preparation “all those upon whom orders may be served voluntarily to conform to them”, hoped that the “new workers will take the place of those who may be disabled by the government, and that the people at large instead of being disheartened or frightened by such orders, will continue their work of quiet organization and construction ~~sketched~~ by the Congress resolution”.<sup>23</sup> For purely constructive work it passed a resolution asking the people to concentrate on three items :

1. Bringing the All India Tilak Swaraj Fund to one crore of rupees,
2. Putting on the Congress register one crore of members,
3. Introducing in the villages and cities twenty lakhs of *charkhas* (spinning wheels). All the three items were to be completed by the 30th June next, the respective provinces contributing to each according to the ratio of its population.<sup>24</sup>

Bihar, worked vigorously to fulfil their quota to Tilak Swaraj Fund. In spite of several difficulties, Bihar collected Rupees seven lakhs and fifty thousand for the Tilak Swaraj Fund and enrolled a large number of people as members of the Congress.<sup>25</sup>

The district of Saran celebrated the death anniversary of Lokmanya Gangadhar Tilak on the 1st of August 1921. In Chapra town a grand procession passed through the streets. There were three decorated chariots, with the pictures of Lokmanya Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi on the first, two beautifully decorated *charkhas* on the second and several bundles of 'Bideshi' (foreign) clothes on the third. Boycott of foreign cloth and total stoppage of intoxicants was urged, hundreds of articles of apparel including pants, neckties, collars, pleaders' gowns, *sarees*, etc. of foreign cloth were burnt.<sup>26</sup>

The Saran District Congress Committee now directed its full attention to the propaganda against drinks and use of foreign articles. Parties were formed headed by senior workers. The Excise and police authorities took it into their head to prosecute unoffending temperance workers on false charges of breaking wine bottles or using force with the result that some workers were jailed.<sup>27</sup>

As a repressive measure of the government, Mahendra Singh, an enthusiastic worker of Gopalganj, was prosecuted for violence under section 233 and 147 of I. P. C.<sup>28</sup>

In Siwan on the 4th August, 1921, the work of picketing was started under the supervision of Chandrika Singh and Ganesh Prasad. As soon as the volunteers stood at their posts though at a considerable distance from the liquor shop, the vendor of a shop came out with a posse of ruffians and began abusing the volunteers and threatened them with dire consequences. The matter was also reported by the shop-keeper to the Sub Inspector of Police, who came with a number of Constables on the spot and forthwith went to the Sub-Divisional Officer, who was holding court, and made an exaggerated report of the whole incident to him. The Sub-Divisional Officer, however, instead of taking any action on the police report, at once sent for Ganesh Prasad, Secretary of the Siwan

Thana Sabha. He appeared before the Sub-Divisional Officer along with Chandrika Singh and the following interesting conversation took place between them :

S. D. O.-Are you preventing people from going to the liquor shop by force ?

Ganesh Prasad-Yes, but not by force. We do it only by requesting people not to do so.

S. I.-Look, Sir, he admits, he admits.

S. D.O.-There is no objection to requesting people not to drink liquor. The only thing that I want is that there should be no breach of peace and no use of violence and I believe that is also what Mahatma Gandhi wants.

Ganesh Prasad-We would never go an inch beyond the law.

Chandrika Singh-Yes, Sir, our principle is not to commit violence or use force in any case, and as true Non-cooperators, we would be quite willing to lay down our lives in preventing breach of peace and rioting.

S. D. O.-That's all right. I have full faith in Non-cooperators.

S. I.-There is bound to be a breach of peace and rioting before 6 p.m. today.

S. D.O.-But the Non-cooperators have just promised that there would be no breach of peace from their side.

Chandrika Singh-Sir, there is absolutely no fear of breach of peace on our side but we hear many *Badma-shes* have been hired by the liquor shop-keeper to create disturbances with us and are threatened every moment. But as Non-cooperators, we are shut out from committing breach of peace as well as from coming to court even in case of being assaulted.

S. D. O.-No, if there is any violence on the Non-cooperators, I shall severely punish the culprits on getting information even if there is no complaint before me by the Non-cooperators.

S. I.-These people should be asked not to picket near the liquor shop but from the public road.

S. D. O. to S.I.-But that would be still worse and illegal. There would be greater chance of disturbance on the public road. Ganesh Prasad is a responsible man of this Movement here, and I have full faith in him. If the volunteers do anything against law, he should be first informed and he would take proper steps. Failing that I should be informed.

Thus ended the episode in court.<sup>29</sup>

In Siwan, on August 18, 1921, a case for alleged trespass in liquor shop at Maharajganj by Bambahadur, Bidya Singh, Satya Narain and Ganga Prasad Sengupta (*Swarajya* volunteers) was taken up under sections 448 and 352 of I.P.C. The occurrence was alleged to have taken place on the 28th July but the complaint was filed on the 2nd August, 1921, by the Bhathiwala (proprietor of the liquor shop). The court suggested compromise. The accused filed written statements and pleaded not guilty and said that the Police and Excisemen had brought this case only to harass the non-cooperators. They refused to defend themselves and said that they did not expect justice from bureaucracy and requested the court to expedite the trial. They refused to be released on bail, which the court had suggested. They willingly and cheerfully went to jail amidst shouting of national slogans.<sup>30</sup>

On the 19th August 1921, Professor Kripalani with Rambinod Sinha reached Dighwara<sup>31</sup> at 6 p.m. and went straight to Malkhachak (Dighwara). Next morning he met the villagers and the weavers of the place who put questions to him about *Swaraj*, *Swadeshi* and Non-violence. He affectionately explained the meaning and importance of the same.<sup>32</sup>

An ordinary meeting of Saran District Congress Committee was held at Chapra on the 21st August 1921. Rajendra Prasad was also present there. The items on agenda dealt with the question as how to support and maintain the dependents of the Temperance and *Swadeshi* workers in the event of their going to jails.<sup>33</sup>

In Dighwara police station, about two thousand Charkhas and three hundred looms worked in the seventy to eighty

villages during the month of August, 1921. The Gandhi Kutir of Malkhachack also did its job well. In the month of August, 1921 alone it produced pure *khadi* cloth of over Rs 500 daily.<sup>34</sup>

It was originally proposed that His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales would formally inaugurate the new legislature in India, both Central and Provincial, constituted under the Reforms Scheme of 1919. But as he had not yet completely recovered from labours of his Dominion tour, His Highness, the Duke of Connaught, was appointed by His Majesty to discharge the task. But later on it was announced that the Prince would visit India in November, 1921. The Indian public generally interpreted such royal visits as an attempt to exploit the sentiments of the Indian people, and the view was generally held that the visit was deliberately planned as a counterpoise to the Non-cooperation Movement with a view to conciliating a large section of the people and rallying it to the support of the government. To meet this situation, the All India Congress Committee met at Bombay, on July 28 1921, and decided to boycott the visit of the Prince of Wales.<sup>35</sup> The All India Congress Committee resolved that :

"It is the duty of every one to refrain from participating in or assisting in any functions organised officially or otherwise in connection with his visit".<sup>36</sup>

At the end of August 1921, the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee met at Patna and decided to take certain steps to make boycott of foreign cloth effective by the 30th September next. This meeting also passed the following resolution about the visit of the Prince of Wales :

"That in the event of the British Government persisting in bringing to India His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales against the wishes of the people, to strengthen its disappearing prestige and its policy in the eyes of the people, this meeting of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee supports the resolutions adopted by the All India Congress Committee in pursuance of the policy of Non-cooperation and it further requests the people of the Province not to take part in any party or procession or festivities on the occasion of visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales".<sup>37</sup>

In Chapra on 3rd September 1921, two of the five volunteers shut up in jail, having participated in the Non-cooperation Movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi, came out of jail. They were hailed by thousands of anxious multitude outside the jail. They were taken to their residence amidst shouts of joy where a mass meeting was held, fresh volunteers enlisted and foreign clothes burnt and then the gathering dispersed.<sup>28</sup>

Again in Chapra on the 4th September 1921, a great sensation was created when the news spread that one of the foremost workers of Saran, viz., Pandit Bharat Mishra, *Sahityacharya*, and a great Pandit of Vedas, and Joint Secretary, Saran District Congress Committee, along with four volunteers were prosecuted for having searched the persons of a women, 60 years old, for concealing wine bottles. Before this, energetic workers had succeeded in stopping sale of liquor by perfectly non-violent means. The authorities tried their best to help the liquor vendors and the Excise Deputy Collector, Sub-Inspector, Inspector and Police Sub-Inspector and their underlings visited the volunteers on duty, threatened them with dire consequences. All this had already made the situation explosive. The prosecution of Bharat Mishra added fuel to the fire. Consequently there was a meeting in the evening in Chapra town with a huge gathering. Zamindars, merchants, and non-cooperators all attended the meeting. Jaleshwar Prasad, Mathura Prasad, Bindeshwari Prasad, M. Ali, Bharat Pandit's old father, Pandit Laksmi Mishra spoke on the occasion. Resolutions were passed that the complainant, the *Mukhtar* who argued the case and accomplices were to be socially boycotted. But better counsel prevailed. The President, Maulvi Syed Saleh Hussain, Jaleshwar Prasad and others insisted on Mahatmaji's instructions and Congress resolutions of avoiding social boycott. Pandit Bharat Mishra himself informed that he would give up taking food if people practised social boycott against the offending woman. Finally, stress was laid on the successful working out of the Congress programmes, viz., Temperance and *Swadeshi*. People vowed to concentrate on the work before them. M. Shamsuddin, ex-Accountant, District Board, Saran, offered himself to work for the sake of Temperance and *Swadeshi*.<sup>29</sup>

### **Arrest of Ali Brothers and its Repercussions on Saran**

In September 1921, government arrested Muhammad Ali, Shaukat Ali and four other Mussalmans on the charge of attending the Karachi Conference where the following resolution had been passed :

“This meeting clearly proclaims that it is in every way religiously unlawful for a Mussalman at the present moment to continue in the British army or to induce others to join the army, and it is the duty of all the Mussalmans in general, and the Ulemas in particular, to see that these religious commandments are brought home to every Mussalmans in the army”.<sup>40</sup>

But the arrest of Ali Brothers caused great resentment amongst the people. Several meetings were held in the different parts of the country in which the arrest of Ali Brothers was condemned. The Karachi resolution was adopted word by word in these meetings. Mahatma Gandhi intensified the campaign by deciding to take up to torn cloth, and thus from the 21st September he became a ‘half-naked Fakir’. In Bihar, several protest meetings were held and the district of Saran was no exception to it. On the 21st September, in a meeting which was held in Patna City, Sayed Mahmood<sup>41</sup> of Saran expressed that the Muhammadans of Bihar shared the sentiments of this resolution and were ready to join the Ali Brothers in prison.<sup>42</sup>

Early in October 1921, the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, which met at Arrah in the district of Sahabad, under the presidentship of Maulvi Muhammad Shafi, endorsed the Karachi Resolution and also adopted the resolution of boycotting the visit of the Prince of Wales. On the same occasion on the 3rd October, 1921, a meeting of the persons interested in Seva Samiti Movement was organized, and a strong central committee was formed under the presidentship of Mahendra Prasad of village Ziradei (Saran) and Mathura Prasad (of Saran) was the captain of the committee. This committee promised to do social services.<sup>43</sup>

The District Magistrate of Saran, Mr. F. M. Luce, passed an order under section 144 Cr. P. C. against Janak Tiwary, pleader Chapra, of village Badurahi, police station Sonapur on the 2nd November 1921. The full text of the notice is given here :



"Whereas it has been proved to my satisfaction that you on 19-10-21 at Sonapur in the National Gandhi Vidyalya delivered speech calculated to cause enmity and hatred between different classes of His Majesty's subjects and whereas on 30-10-1921, at Sonapur Railway Station you used abusive language towards His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, you are hereby prohibited under section 144 Cr. P. C. for delivering any public speech within Saran district for a period of two months".<sup>44</sup>

The following police officers of Saran district resigned from their services in 1921, in support of Non-cooperation Movement;

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>District</i>
Sub-Inspector	Mahbub Ali Khan	Saran
Constable	Sheikh Ahmad	Saran
Constable	Badshah Khan	Saran <sup>45</sup>

#### **Resolution on Civil Disobedience passed**

The All India Congress Committee met at Delhi on the 5th November 1921, to authorise every province on its own responsibility, to undertake Civil Disobedience including non-payment of taxes, in the manner considered most suitable by the respective Provincial Congress Committees subject to the following conditions :

"Every individual civil resister must have fulfilled the part of the N. C. O. programme applicable to him, should know spinning, must have discarded foreign cloth, taken a *khaddar*, must be a believer in Hindu-Muslim unity, believer in Non-violence as absolutely essential for the redress of the Khilafat and Punjab wrongs and the attainment of *swaraj*, and, if a Hindu must by his personal conduct show that he regards untouchability as a bolt upon nationalism. In regard to mass Civil Disobedience a district or tahsil should be treated as a unit and therein a majority of the population must have adopted full Swadeshi and must be clothed out of handspun cloth in that area and must believe in and practice all the other items of N. C. O. No one should expect support out of public funds.

It was to the working committee to waive any condition on the application of P.C.C.S.”<sup>46</sup>

In Saran, the constructive programmes were carried on e.g., in Dighwara Police Station there were then about seven thousand spinning wheels and five to six thousand looms that were working. The Gandhi *Kutir* at Malkhachak, under Police Station Dighwara in the district of Saran, was doing very useful work under the direction of Ram Binod Singh. It was in intimate touch with nearly two hundred weavers in the surrounding villages, whom it supplied *charkha*-yarn, and received from them in return the full quantity of *khaddar*, woven with the yarn, after due payment of stipulated wages. The Gandhi *Kutir* also gave much impetus to spinning, as the poor women of the villages found a ready market for their yarn. Every spinner got at least seven rupees a month, and this became a means of livelihood, specially to the helpless widows.<sup>47</sup>

In the matter of arbitration also, the Dighwara Thana was doing good work. Each village had a Panchayat Committee, which decided matters of dispute in that village. Appeal against its decision could be made to a body, called Halka-Panchayat, consisting of representatives of ten to fifteen surrounding villages. From the Halka-Panchayat a case might go up to the final Panchayat Board, consisting of five honest and influential members, nominated by the Thana Congress Committee itself.<sup>48</sup>

Madan Gopal Joshi, Prof. Bari and Kashinath were deputed by the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee for the *swadeshi* propaganda in Sonapur fair. They reached Sonapur on the 12th November 1921, accompanied by a dozen of students of Bihar Vidyapith. Posters were affixed on the walls of a large number of buildings at Sonapur. Leaflets were distributed daily in which the use of *swadeshi* clothes was advocated. Batches of hawkers were engaged who used to go round the *mela* and sold *khaddar*. Music procession also used to pass daily through all roads and lanes atleast once a day.<sup>49</sup>

### Hartal on the 17th November 1921

The Prince of Wales landed in Bombay on November 17, 1921, at about 10 a.m. In accordance with the resolution of the

Working Committee of the Congress, the *hartal* was observed all over India. In Sonapur fair also a complete half-day *haratal* was observed. All shops of cloths, sweet-meats, fruits and vegetables were closed till 12 noon. All sorts of carriages had stopped plying. Even the sale of elephants, horses and cows etc. were postponed.<sup>50</sup> Impressed by this Nirsu Narayan Singh, who represented the south Saran constituency, spoke in Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council on the 25th January 1922, as follows.

"I may tell you, Sir, of my own experience of the 17th November. I was in the Sonapur fair and I made it a point to make enquiries from shop-keepers if they were going to observe *hartal* on account of any duress from the Non-cooperators. But my enquiries showed that they were willing to do it, they said that if other people were making sacrifices they would also make some sacrifice by closing their shops for a day."

The working Committee of the All India Congress Committee at its sitting on the 23rd November at Bombay issued instructions for the formation of a National Volunteer Corps (Qaumi Sevak Dal). The Bihar Provincial Congress Committee at its meeting on the 27th November also formed the Bihar National Volunteer Corps with the headquarters at Muzaffarpur, consisting of the following persons :

1. M. Muhammad Shafi
2. Deep Narayan Singh, Bhagalpur
3. Mazharul Haque, Saran
4. Dr. Arunjay Sahay Varma
5. Narain Prasad of Chapra.<sup>51</sup>

Its main duty was "to keep peace, to arrange for committees and assemblies, to make arrangements at the time of processions and *hartals*, to serve people in the time of need, to carry out other national work according to orders etc."

The Purnea District Congress Conference and Khilafat Conference were held on the 3rd and 4th December 1921 on the grounds of Raibahadur P.C. Lal near Purnea Station. Krishna Kumari Devi of Chapra addressed the meeting in an impressive way which moved the audience to tears. She said

that “ ‘Lajja’ (honour) no longer remains, this has been lost in the Panjab where women have been outraged.” She specially mentioned killing of the boy, Madan Mohan. She, being a lady, had decided to come out of *purdah* and to work for the cause of the country. She was ready to go to jail and even to gallows for the sake of the country. She hoped that the male brethren would follow suit, but if they were not prepared to follow her, they should sit within the closed walls. If they would all be ready to go to jail, Government would not be able to accommodate them. In face of the Punjab tragedy and Khilafat wrongs, would they still continue to be Government servants? They should join the Non-Cooperation Movement and obey Mahatma Gandhi. She was ready to sacrifice even her child and husband for the attainment of *swaraj*.<sup>52</sup>

Next day she called on those who were not willing to join the Movement. She asked them to give up wearing male's dress and take to female's garments. Her speeches made considerable impression on the people.<sup>53</sup>

At Chapra, on the 14th December, 1921, it was proclaimed by the government officials by beat of drum that any one wearing a badge of the Sevak Dal or doing the work of a national volunteer would be arrested. Similar proclamations were made at other places with the addition that any one putting on *khadi* would also make himself liable to be arrested. Consequently, on the 15th December, the local Congress authorities announced publicly that people should not be afraid of the government proclamation, while on the contrary, they should welcome imprisonment and enroll themselves as volunteers of the *Qaumi Sevak Dal*. But on the 16th December 1921, when the said proclamation was announced, the Superintendent of Police arrested all those who were engaged in such work just after their arrival in front of the police station. After hearing this Bindeshwari Prasad, the Congress Secretary and Maulvi Nazir Ahmad, the Captain of Volunteers, with three other volunteers went to the same place to do the same work with the Congress flag in their hands. Later on, the Superintendent of Police released some of the volunteers of the first batch who were earlier arrested.<sup>54</sup>

A large number of young boys along with a Railway Station Master were arrested at Sonapur for shouting 'Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jay'.<sup>55</sup>

Thousands of volunteers were enrolled daily all over the district. In Basantpur Thana alone, the place selected for civil disobedience, about two thousand volunteers enrolled themselves within four days.<sup>56</sup>

On the 17th December, Pandit Bharat Mishra, ex-Joint Secretary, Saran District Congress Committee, who was the *sardar* of the volunteers, Madho Singh, senior Vakil, Chapra Dewant Sahai, Secretary, Chapra Town Congress Committee were arrested in a public meeting at Chapra. Prabhunath Singh, Secretary of Ekma Thana Congress Committee, with nine others were arrested in a public meeting at Manjhi.<sup>57</sup>

On the 20th December, at Gopalganj, Mahendra Singh, Secretary, Thana Congress Committee and assistant teacher of National School, was arrested and was sentenced to one year simple imprisonment.<sup>58</sup>

The government repression become more severe in consequence of the boycott of the visit of the Prince of Wales. On December 22, 1921, while the Prince of Wales was on his way to Patna, the European officers of the Sonapur police station, raided the Congress Office at Sonapur.<sup>59</sup> The following statement of Jagdip Narayan, Secretary of the Thana Congress Committee, Sonapur, is quite revealing :<sup>60</sup>

"I am Secretary of the Thana Congress Committee, Sonapur. I was going about in the bazar with eleven volunteers on December 21, 1921, to request the people to observe *hartal* on the next day (i.e. December, 22). When I was to the west of my office near the Post Office, the Superintendent of Police, came down from verandah of the Thana and asked the Police Constables and other Police Officers to march on. The Superintendent of Police moved forward. Some 100 Constables followed him without any information and encircled us—the volunteers. Some Constables had lathies, some had small sticks and some had canesticks and some Police Officers had *bans ka phata* and walking sticks. The Sub-Inspector of Sonapur was not with

them. The Head Constable was with them. After encircling us, the Superintendent took off the *swaraj flag* from hands of Ramchandra Maharaj who is a Congress volunteer and a worker and the other Constables took off the flags from other volunteers. After that the Constables began to take off and tear the clothes of the volunteers and brought them to the Congress Office by pushing and maltreating them. Afterwards a group of forty Constables reached from the eastern side. They too had no uniforms. They had with them, Ganga Singh, Head Constable, who was in uniform. They had *lathes* like the previous group. All the Constables in a body with the S.P. and D.S.P. and Shri Kashi Nath, Daroga and a Musalman Daroga, came to the Congress Office. The S.P. entered the Congress Office and the Sub-Inspector and fifteen Constables too went in. I was standing outside on the road and saw that police threw away papers, registers, books, *khaddar* caps and *kurtas* and the photo of Mahatma Gandhi on the road and then S.P. set fire to them with his own hand. The rest of the Constables did not allow any volunteer to enter the verandah of the Congress Office, and beating and drove away those who approached it. Some volunteers were beaten and clothes of some were taken off. When the papers, etc. were being burnt I had in my heap *Ramayan* and *Gita*. I cried out that there were my *Ramayan* and *Gita* and requested them not to burn them. But the police paid no heed and the S.P. said "burn all". After burning papers etc. the S.P. asked all the volunteers to go to their respective houses. We refused and thereupon the police went away. After that I and other volunteers entered the office and found that the hinges of the box were pulled out and the box was open. There was Rs. 178.00 in the box which had been taken out. Of which Rs. 150.00 was received from Chapra Congress office on December 19, 1921, from Chapra 'Flood Relief Fund' for distribution among the poor and Rs. 28.00 was received on account of school fund. I sent three telegrams, through Dhanukdhari Prasad to be despatched to the District Congress Committee, to the 'Patrika' and one to the 'Aaj' of Benares about this incident. It appeared that the telegraph office refused to receive them and then I sent Dhanukdhari Prasad to inform the Chapra Zila Office".

There were others also whose statements were published in the *Searchlight* on the same date. They all supported the above statement. They were : Dhanukdhari Prasad, Assistant Secretary, Thana Congress Committee, Sheo Singh, Sonapur, Nathuni Singh, Kundi Sah, confectioner, B. Lawrence, Muhammad Abdul Hai, a hotel keeper and Bishun Singh of Sonapur.

The Secretary of the Saran District Congress Committee deputed a few gentlemen to ascertain the real facts about the incident. They were Lakhani Prasad Vakil, Bankey Behari Lal Vakil, Tirbeni Prasad Pleader, Kamla Kant Sahai, Assistant Secretary, District Congress Committee, Harihar Saran. Banker and Merchant, Suresh Bahadur, Banker and Zemindar. These gentlemen visited Sonapur on December 23, 1921, and after making a thorough enquiry into the incident they reported "We are satisfied that the allegations made in the report is substantially correct and true".<sup>61</sup>

The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa in his letter (D. O. No. 199 C) dated January 16, 1922 asked from Mr. F. M. Luce, I. C. S., District Magistrate and Collector, Saran to "enquire and let me know for the information of Government what are the real facts and case".<sup>62</sup>

Mr. F. M. Luce sent the following reply on January 18, 1922 :

"...on the afternoon of 21st December 1921, the Sonapur Non-cooperator volunteers tried to organize a procession starting from their office at Sonapur to go along the road to Pahlezaghat in connection with their efforts to promote a *hartal* on December 22nd, when the H. R. H. the Prince of Wales was passing through Patna. Mr. Purkins<sup>63</sup> and I heard of this about 1 p. m. and I directed Mr. Purkins to break up the procession by force if necessary. He went off in his car, collected some armed police, armed only with sticks, and broke up the procession. No force was used and no one was injured. There were some pamphlets about the *hartal* and some Gandhi flags, which he had burnt on the public road.....Mr. Purkins returned to my camp after not more than half an hour, informed me of what he

had done, and I approved of his action, which was taken in accordance with my orders. ...I trust that the Government will agree that this procession was intended to insult the Prince of Wales, and will approve the action taken by me".<sup>64</sup>

In Revalganj, about ten volunteers including the Thana Secretary were arrested and tried for taking out a procession and they were all fined rupees one hundred each or in default to undergo one month's imprisonment under section 32 of the Police Act. They did not pay the fine and cheerfully went to jail. The warrants of attachment of properties were issued for realisation of fines. On December 24, 1921, the Head Constable of Revalganj Thana collected a large number of *chwkidar* and went to the houses of some of the accused persons to attach their moveable properties. The properties of Basawan Teli and Sadaqat Hussain were attached on that day. In the house of Basawan Teli, the Police Officer attached everything including bedding, quilts, blankets and also the cooked rice which the females had kept for their meals. Similarly the house of Sadaqat Hussain was also attached.

In spite of orders issued by the Inspector General of Prisons, prisoners in Chapra jail were not allowed newspaperes even at their own cost.

The thirty sixth session of the Indian National Congress was held at Ahmedabad on the 27th and 28th December 1921. Five hundred fifty eight delegates from Bihar attended it, of whom twenty two were members of the Subject Committee which held its sittings on the 24th, 25th, 27th and 28th December.<sup>67</sup> This session of the Congress passed some momentous resolutions.

After returning from Ahmedabad, a meeting of the Provincial Congress Committee was convened at Patna on the 5th January 1922 to discuss the future plan of action keeping in view the Ahmedabad resolutions. It was resolved not to introduce Civil Disobedience immediately but to concentrate efforts, for the time being, on the recruitment of volunteers. The following instructions were issued to the District Congress Committees.<sup>68</sup>



"(i) The Congress has authorised the Provincial Congress Committees to allow any individual or the masses of any particular area to begin Civil Disobedience on its own responsibility if he or they has or have fulfilled all the conditions mentioned below and can act upto the principle of non-violence. Till all the conditions are fulfilled and the Provincial Congress Committee does not accord its sanction, the Civil Disobedience cannot be begun.

(ii) The conditions whose fulfilment is necessary for Civil Disobedience are as follows :

In order to start Civil Disobedience the district or tahsil should be regarded as one unit. In that area *swadeshi* should have been fully popularised and the majority of the inhabitants of that area should have begun to use of hand-woven and hand spun cloths. They should have faith in principles of Non-cooperation and should act upto them, e. g. not to attend courts, withdraw boys and girls from schools and colleges, get their cases decided by the *panchayats*, and suspension of practice by Vakils.

(a) Therefore, the Congress should act up to them having faith in principle of non-violence by mind, word and deed.

(b) *Swadeshi* should have been so much popularised that atleast 80% of the men and women of that area must be using locally manufactured *khaddar*. In order to fulfil the object, the people should encourage others to use *charkha* to weave cloth and wear *khaddar* so that this object might be achieved as soon as possible.

(iii) The union among Hindus, Muslims and other communities should be strengthened so that men of all castes and creeds be of one heart.

(iv) Among the Hindus, those castes which are regarded as untouchables should not be looked down upon nor physical contact with them be considered objectionable."

It appeared from a letter dated January 6, 1922, Camp-Chapra, from the Deputy Inspector General of Police, Northern Range, that a serious assault was committed on Mr. C. F.

Armstrong in the afternoon of the 4th January, 1922. The direct cause of the trouble was that an assault was committed by Mr. Armstrong at 2 p.m. on a Coolie who was said to have appeared before him in *khaddar*.<sup>70</sup>

On account of Non-Cooperation Movement, the following persons of Saran resigned their services from the government post :

1. Badsah Khan-Armed Police No. 559
2. Shekh Ahmad-Civil Police No. 588
3. Harihar Shukul-Constable, Civil Police.
4. M. Zahiruddin Head Maulvi, Victoria Memorial Aided H. E. School, Siwan.

Bindeshwari Prasad, (brother-in-law of Shri Braj Kishore Prasad) of Chapra who was practising in the court at Gorakhpur was arrested and put in Agra Central Jail.<sup>71</sup>

Shri Prabhunath Singh, Secretary of Ekma Thana Sabha and Pandit Brijnandan Ojha and four others, who were charged under Criminal Amendment Act, were tried at Chapra by the Joint Magistrate on the 19th January, 1922. The Magistrate sentenced Pandit Brijnandan Ojha and Prabhunath Singh each to one year's imprisonment and four others to one month's imprisonment. On 20th January, 1922, they were transferred to Central Jail, Buxar.<sup>72</sup>

### **Bardoli Decision, Chauri Chaura Incident and Suspension of Mass Civil Disobedience**

On January 29, 1922, the people of Bardoli in the Gujarat of the then Bombay Presidency, decided under the presidentship of Vitthalbhai J. Patel to embark on mass Civil Disobedience.<sup>73</sup> The Working Committee met at Surat on 31st January 1922, and gave the green signal to the people of Bardoli to start it. But before the people of Bardoli had actually commenced mass Civil Disobedience, Mahatma Gandhi requested His Excellency the Viceroy, on the 1st February 1922, urging him to revise his policy of repression, to set free the non-violent non-cooperating prisoners, and to rescue the country "from paralysis of

freedom of association and freedom of press". But on the 6th February, the government rejected the demands of Mahatma Gandhi. He sent a rejoinder on the 7th February, cataloguing "facts beyond challenge", as "infallible proofs of official lawlessness and barbarism".<sup>75</sup>

On the 5th February 1922, 21 Constables and one Sub-Inspector were burnt by a violent mob in a police station at Chauri Chaura.<sup>76</sup> It gave a rude shock to Gandhiji and he decided to stop the programme of mass Civil Disobedience. The Working Committee of the All India Congress Committee met at Bardoli on the 11th and 12th February 1922 and passed the resolution suspending the mass Civil Disobedience till peaceful atmosphere was restored.<sup>77</sup>

Rajendra Prasad, who was at Bardoli at that time sent the following message to the people of Bihar :

"In view of the Gorakhpur tragedy (Chauri Chaura) the Working Committee suspends all Civil Disobedience, including activities for courting arrest and picketing except by approved persons for bonafide reform purposes. It directs concentration on detailed constructive programme of enrolling one crore members, organising Swadeshi, National Schools, Panchayats and social service, preaching temperance, collecting funds, levying one per cent on income and uplifting depressed classes".<sup>78</sup>

The Excise Sub-Inspector, filed a case against the N.C.O. volunteers of Chainpur (Saran) named Bali Chaubey and Bindeshwari Sahai. The complaint against them was that on 22nd March 1922, they had requested the Excise Sub-Inspector not to visit the *bhathi* (liquor shop), as he was their brother.<sup>79</sup>

A complaint was also filed in the Siwan against Maulvi Abdul Ghani, the local Thana Secretary, Hakim Jamal and Amir Darjee for getting the toddy tree branches cut in order to make them unfit to yield toddy. The Sub-Divisional Officer summoned Mr. Amir at first instance, but he absconded. The court was informed that there was no one by that name in Siwan. The Sub-Divisional Officer issued a warrant against Mr. Amir and ordered that his properties be attached till he surrendered.<sup>80</sup>

There were nearly 4000 spinning wheels in Dighwara Thana and 500 to 600 looms worked there. People generally used *swadeshi* cothes.<sup>81</sup>

• Mr. E.L.L. Hammond, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa, reported to Mr. S.P.O. Donnel, Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department in his letter (D.O. No.1695/C) dated 2nd May, 1922 from Ranchi about the situation in the second half of April, 1922 that "In the district of Saran, however, there has been some difficulty experienced in collecting chaukidari tax..."<sup>82</sup>

Madho Sinha, Pleader, Pandit Bharat Mishra and Deonath Sahai released from Buxar Jail and reached at Chapra on July 11, 1922. A big crowd of people was present at Railway Station to give them befitting welcome. Next day a public-meeting was held in local National School which was addressed by them. In this meeting they laid emphasis on constructive programmes chiefly spinning of Khadi yarn and temperance.<sup>83</sup>

Vindeshwari Prasad and Mathura Prasad, Secretary and Assistant Secretary of Saran District Congress Sabha went for propaganda work to Ekma, Maharajganj and Mirganj Police Stations in the district of Saran.<sup>84</sup>

On the 21st August 1922, a meeting of the District Congress Committee was held at Mairwa (Siwan). It was the first time that the District Committee met a village. A public meeting was also held on this occasion in which more than ten thousand people from the surrounding villages attended. Several speakers including Paramhansa Raghvananda, Ram Udar Dass, addressed the meeting and exhorted the people to use khaddar.<sup>85</sup>

The constructive work of the Congress was vigorously taken up by the prominent workers of the Saran district. Mathura Prasad and Pandit Bharat Mishra were put in charge of the Sadar Sub-Division, Bindeshwari Prasad, Narain Prasad Sinha were incharge of the Siwan Sub-Division, and Ramodar Das and Madhav Singh that of Gopalganj Sub-Division.<sup>86</sup>

Shri Jagat Guru Shankaracharya arrived at Sonepur on the 2nd November 1922. He was received by Non-cooperators and was taken in procession through the *mela* to 'Gorakshini'

(cow protection home) where he took his abode. On 3rd November, 1922, he addressed a meeting in the campus of National School, Sonapur. The subject of his speech was "Ethics of Swaraj". He advanced various arguments to prove that the British Government was unfit to govern India.<sup>87</sup>

The All India Congress Committee held its 37th Annual Session at Gaya in December, 1922. Rajendra Prasad was the Secretary of the Reception Committee. This Session was presided over by Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das. The important question in the Gaya Congress was that of "Council entry". In his brilliant presidential address Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das very strongly advocated it. But the Gaya Congress decided against it.<sup>88</sup>

On the 26th February 1923, the 'Swarajya Party of Bihar' was formed at Patna with the following office bearers :

President	—Narayan Prasad of Chapra.
Secretary	—Prof. Abdul Bari. National College, Patna.

Assistant Secretaries—Krishna Ballabh Sahay, National College. Harnandan Sahay of Chapra.<sup>89</sup>

The All India Congress Deputation consisting of Rajgopalachari, Moazzam Ali and Rajendra Prasad visited Chapra in March, 1923. It is evident from letter D O. No. 113/C.T.) dated Puri, the 2nd April, 1923, from the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar to the Secretary of India, (Home Department), Simla, that Rajendra Prasad delivered a most despondent speech there.<sup>90</sup>

The Bihar Provincial Congress Committee which met at Monghyr in April, 1923, under the presidentship of Braj Kishore Prasad, the brave son of Saran, passed the following resolution regarding elections to the Municipalities and the District Boards under the new Act .

- (i) Resolved that all the seats in the Municipalities and District Boards of Bihar be contested at the coming elections on behalf of the committee.
- (ii) That it is desirable for the members of the village unions and other Congress Committees to get themselves

elected to various Union Boards and village Panchayats under the Village Administration Act when it comes into force and to carry on village administration under the guidance of the Congress Committee.

(iii) Resolved that to carry out the said resolution and to place a programme of work before the voter and to take all the necessary steps in connection with the said elections and to form rules, a committee of the following gentlemen with power to co-opt be formed :

1. Rajendra Prasad
2. Maulvi Muhammad Shafi
3. Bipin Bihari Verma
4. Tajeshwar Prasad
5. Shrikrishna Sinha, Convener.<sup>91</sup>

The Municipal elections under the new Act commenced from October, 1923, and continued till the end of November 1923. Much enthusiasm was also shown in the General Elections for the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. Strangely enough Maharaja Bahadur Guru Mahadeva Saran Prasad Sahi of Hathwa was defeated in the election for Provincial Council in his own zemindari by Jaleshwar Prasad non-co-operator.<sup>92</sup>

In Saran, Mazharul Haque was elected as Chairman of the Chapra District Board. It appears from Government statement that in this (Saran) district twenty-six Congress candidates were elected out of thirty seats.<sup>93</sup> In Saran District Board, twenty-three of the elected members were non-co-operators of whom five were students, two were dismissed Head Constables, two clerks, who were dismissed from Hathwa Raj, and two were ex-School masters.<sup>94</sup>

In December, 1924, a *khadi* Exhibition was organised at Patna. This was held under the supervision of Rajendra Prasad, who made it a purely non-political function. Several high officials of the Government participated in it. Prominent amongst them were the Hon'ble Sir Dawson Miller, Chief Justice of the Patna High Court and Sir Hugh Mc Pherson, Member of the Governor's Executive Council in Bihar. In the *charkha* competition, two boys of Malkhachak, Gandhi Kutir, Dighwara

(Saran) got the first prize. Rajendra Prasad presented a report describing the progress of the *khadi* in Bihar. Prizes were distributed by the wife of the Chief Justice, Lady Miller.<sup>95</sup>

During the first half of January, 1925, the Vice-Chairman of the Chapra Local Board, directed sixty to seventy Gurus (teachers) serving under the Board to use *charkha*, to teach its use to their pupils, and to wear *khaddar*.<sup>96</sup>

In April 1925, the Saran District Board and Chapra Municipality proposed to present an 'Address' to Ram Udar Dass,<sup>97</sup> after his release from jail. He was a prominent non-cooperator and was prosecuted under section 124 A, I.P.C. The Additional District Magistrate, Patna, had convicted and sentenced him to imprisonment for two years. He had made seditious speeches in Patna in 1923.<sup>98</sup> The decision of the Saran District Board to accord welcome to Ram Udar Dass was not liked by the District Officer of Saran. On the request of the District Officer, Saran, the Commissioner, Tirhut Division, Muzaffarpur in his letter (D.O.N. 222/C) dated 3rd May 1925, and again dated 8th May, 1925, suggested to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar that "the District Board should be asked to withdraw and express regret, or should be suspended".<sup>99</sup> But the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa in his letter (D.O.No. 1042/C) dated 6th June 1925, rejected the proposal of the Tirhut Commissioner.<sup>100</sup>

On 30th September, 1925, Mahatma Gandhi visited 'Gandhi Kutir' at Malkhachak near Dighwara (Saran) accompanied by Rajendra Prasad and some others. The political situation of the district was discussed.<sup>101</sup>

The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa forwarded a government decision to the Secretary to the Education Department in his letter (No. UO Memo No. 264/C) dated 18th June, 1925, which runs as follows :

"At a joint meeting held on the 6th June 1925, the Government considered the action to be taken on the national song entitled 'Ish Binay' (Prayer to God),<sup>101</sup> which has been prescribed by the Sadar Local Boards of Darbhanga and Chapra to be recited by the students of schools maintained by them.

The song was proscribed as seditious by an order of the Political Department and that Education Department should take the necessary consequential action, including steps to prevent the prescription by the District Boards of objectionable publications for use in schools. Thus was proscribed the national song beginning with words *Is desh ko hey din bandhu ap fir apnaiye* and ending with the words *Hey Deo, wah apni daya fir ekbar dikhaiye* composed by Shri Maithili Saran Gupta".<sup>103</sup>

In 1926, to popularise *khadi*, exhibitions were held in Bihar under the supervision of Rajendra Prasad. In Saran also, one was inaugurated at Chapra by Mazharul Haque and the other was held at Mairwa.<sup>104</sup>

On the 16th January 1927, Mahatma Gandhi arrived at Sonapur from Patna accompanied by Rajendra Prasad. Here he addressed a public meeting on *khaddar*, untouchability and Hindu-Muslim unity. Next he proceeded to Chapra by train where in a public meeting he spoke on the subjects noted above. Mazharul Haque and Mahendra Prasad, presented 'Address' to him on behalf of the District Board and the Municipality respectively. After that the Mahatma visited Ekma, Maharajganj and Ziradei (the birth place of Rajendra Prasad) which Gandhiji considered to be "a place of pilgrimage". On the 18th January 1927, he reached Mairwa, where he addressed a mammoth gathering of over 30,000 people collected from several places. The meeting was "a model of orderliness and the biggest" of the meetings Gandhiji ever addressed during this tour in Bihar.<sup>105</sup>

At Siwan, Gandhiji delivered a speech on 'Hindu-Muslim Unity' and observed that "God will one day make the Musalman and the Hindu do what we will not do today. If you are believers, I beseech you to retire into yourselves and pray to the Indweller to stay your hands from wrongs and to make them do the right thing. Let that be our prayer every morning and evening. There is no other way".<sup>106</sup>

The other places visited by Gandhiji were Siwan, Gopalganj, and Mirganj of Saran district.<sup>107</sup>



In November 1927, the British Government appointed the Simon Commission. This Commission consisted of seven members and was presided over by Sir John Simon. All of its members were Englishmen. The Commission was boycotted by the Indians on the ground that it had no Indian member. The exclusion of Indians from a body which was to prepare the future constitution of India was so unnatural and unreasonable that the announcement was received with profound disappointment and righteous indignation by all political leaders in India.<sup>108</sup>

On the 3rd February 1928, the Simon Commission arrived in Bombay. On that day complete *hartal* was observed in India and huge demonstrations were held. The demonstrators marched in processions waving black flags and carrying banners with the words "Go back, Simon". In Chapra also complete *hartal* was observed and the shops were closed on that day. Unfortunately a Muhammadan refused to close his shop and this proved to be a cause of great tension between Hindus and Musalmans of Chapra town.<sup>109</sup>

The Simon Commission reached Patna on the 12th December 1938. About three thousand people were present at the Railway Platform of Patna Junction to express their feelings of protest against the unwanted Commission. Several persons from Saran district were also present on the platform. They all raised the slogans and shouted "Go back Simon" and also showed black flags.<sup>110</sup>

It is evident from a government report regarding national schools for the half year ending 31st of December 1928, that in Saran alone there were two national schools having 87 pupils.<sup>111</sup>

The Calcutta Session of the Indian National Congress held from the 29th December 1928, was largely attended by the Bihar delegates under the leadership of Rajendra Prasad, the proud son of Saran. These delegates voted for Mr. Gandhi's resolution for "dominion status within the year".<sup>112</sup>

According to a resolution of the Working Committee of the All India Congress Committee, held in Calcutta on the 3rd January 1929, Mahatma Gandhi prepared a scheme for the boycott of foreign cloth and replacing the same by *khadi*. The

Delhi meeting of the Congress Working Committee from the 17th to 19th February 1929, adopted this scheme. In Saran also the boycott of foreign cloth was well observed. Meetings were held and foreign cloth was publicly burnt. To facilitate this work Rajendra Prasad personally addressed the workers of Saran district.<sup>113</sup>

At Gopalganj on the 13th May 1929, Rajendra Prasad addressed a meeting. In this meeting he emphasised the necessity of unity. He pointed out that disunity amongst Indian people enabled the English to capture the country and he further said that unity at Bardoli enabled them to defeat the government. He said that there were still many traitors in this country like Mirzafar. He also explained the Congress programmes to the people. Mahendra Singh of Manikapore, police station Gopalgaj also spoke on this occasion.<sup>114</sup> The Deputy Inspector General of Police (C.I.D), Patna, in his letter (U.O.No. 410-S.B.  
36. S. 29) dated 14th June 1929, forwarded the above speeches to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa for information.<sup>115</sup>

On the 15th May 1929, a meeting attended by about three thousand people was held at Kateyan<sup>116</sup> (close to the Bazar) where there was organized a small *mela*. The President of the meeting was Kamla Mishra of Bhingarichak, police station Kateyan (Saran) and the main speakers were Girish Tiwary of Sitalpur-Bareja (Saran) and Adya Saran Pandey of village Pokhra, police station Maharajganj (Saran). Pandit Girish Tiwary said that although *Swaraj* could not be obtained without sacrifice, the people must be non-violent and be particularly careful to avoid conflict with or doing violence to government servants. He appealed for the use of *khaddar* and regretted its non-use by the audience. Adya Saran Pandey explained that a man did not command respect unless he had a good home, good cloth and good food, but all these were denied to them as the government was draining the country and sending their money abroad. He then explained the meaning of *swaraj*. In

his appeal to Congress members and volunteers he said that they must be prepared to go to jail, to die and suffer. He also appealed for prohibition and unity and particularly for the removal of untouchability and the institution of the village panchayat system.<sup>117</sup>

The speeches were referred to the government by the authorities concerned for the necessary action. Mr. H. K. Briscoe, the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa, in his letter (D.O.No. 1115/C) dated, Ranchi, the 26th June 1929, informed Mr. A.P. Middleton, Officiating Commissioner of Tirhut Division, Muzaffarpur, that "the attention of Government has been drawn to certain rather violent speeches in Saran by one Adya Saran Pandey, and I am to ask that an eye may be kept on him with a view to prosecute, if necessary."<sup>118</sup>

On the 24th August 1929, Mr. H. K. Briscoe, the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa, proclaimed that "the Governor in Council declares that the conduct of the inhabitants of the area specified below, within the jurisdiction of the Siwan, Barharia, Basantpur and Maharajganj police stations in the district of Saran, has rendered it expedient to increase the number of the police by the appointment of an additional force consisting of one Inspector, four Head Constables and forty armed Constables to be quartered in the said villages, at the cost of the inhabitants thereof, subject to any orders which may be passed exempting any person or class or section of inhabitants. This proclamation shall remain in force for a period of ten months with effect from the 1st September 1929".<sup>119</sup>

"The above proclamation shall apply to the whole of the villages named below."<sup>120</sup>

<i>Thana, Village No.</i> (1)	<i>Name of village</i> (2)	<i>P.S. and Thana.</i> (3)
434	Surwala	Siwan, Thana Siwan
435	Walipur	"
436	Mithanpura	"
513	Pipra	"

(1)	(2)	(3)
520	Kaithi	"
521	Saraia	"
522	Dinapatti	"
523	Hakma	"
527	Rampur	"
528	Dihiya	"
529	Bangra Srikant	
531	Bharathpur	"
532	Nathanpura	"
538	Tarwara	"
514	Kanahar	Barharia, Thana Siwan
515	Hardo Bara	"
516	Babhan Bara	"
518	Ahirni	"
519	Chaki Hassan	"
524	Salahpur	"
525	Nasopur Saraia	"
526	Fakhruddinpur	"
530	Daniyalpur	"
107	Balia	Maharajganj, Thana Basantpur
27	Sarari	Basantpur, Thana Basantpur
28	Mahammadpur	"
29	Dumra	"
30	Pachpakaria Tulsi	"
31	Pachpakaria Padumpatti	"
32	Heyatpur	"
33	Jagdishpur	"
34	Bahopur	"
35	Karpalia	"
36	Khagni	"
96	Pahleypur	Basantpur, Thana Basantpur
97	Saidpur	"
98	Barari	"
99	Bahadurpur	"
100	Basantpur	"
101	Satwar	"

(1)	(2)	(3)
102	Chanchopali	„
103	Dichchitpur	„
104	Jangalbelas	„
105	Karanpura	„
106	Mathia	„
108	Kaleanpur	„
109	Jagarnathpur	„
110	Sarea	„
112	Sisai	„

The twenty-eighth session of the Bihar Provincial Congress met at Monghyr on the 9th December 1929, and Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel also attended this meeting. He toured the province of Bihar exhorting the people to implement the constructive programme of the Congress and to be ready for the inevitable struggle. In the district of Saran, at one place he advised his audience not to pay Chaukidari tax.<sup>121</sup>

The 44th Session of the All India National Congress was held at Lahore from the 29th to 31st December 1929, under the presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru and passed the momentous resolution of "Complete Independence". While the Congress was in session, veteran leader of the Congress, Mazharul Haque, expired at Faridpur, near Andar in the district of Saran. The death of Mazharul Haque created a void not only in the national life of the country as a whole, but it was also an irreparable loss to the province of Bihar and also to the district of Saran. Mahatma Gandhi sent a condolence message to Begum Mazharul Haque, which was as follows :

"Mazhar-ul-Haque was a great patriot, a good Mussalman and a philosopher. Fond of ease and luxury, when Non-cooperation came he threw them off as we throw superfluous scales off the skin. He grew as fond of the ascetic life as he was of princely life. Growing weary of our dissensions, he lived in retirement, doing such unseen services as he could, and praying for the best. He was fearless both in speech and action. The Sadakat Ashram near Patna is a fruit of his constructive labours. Though he did not live in it for long as he had intended, his conception of the Ashram made it possible for the Bihar Vidyapith to find a permanent habitation. It may yet

prove a cement to bind the two communities together. Such a man would be missed at all times, he will be the more missed at this juncture in the history of the country. I tender my condolences to Begum Mazhar-ul-Haque and her family".<sup>122</sup>

Thus the period between 1921 to 1929 proved to be highly momentous in the history of the Indian National Movement. In the beginning of this period Mahatma Gandhi started his Non-cooperation Movement which became greatly popular throughout India. Thousands of Indians joined this movement and courted arrest cheerfully. But Mahatma Gandhi stopped it suddenly when he saw its violent manifestation at Chauri Chaura (U.P.). This period was also characterised by Khilafat Movement and attempts for Hindu-Muslim unity. Besides this, the Congress also adopted several constructive programmes which were carried through successfully and this brought about a new political awakening amongst the people of India including Saran. The district of Saran took active interest in the political movement and contributed a good deal towards making it a success as far as possible.

### Notes

1. Dodwell, H.H., *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. VI, p. 774.
2. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, p. 206.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 210.
4. Prasad, Rajendra, *Mahatma Gandhi and Bihar*, p. 43.
5. *The Searchlight*, February 2, 1921.
6. Report of the Bihar Vidyapith etc., 1921-26, pp. 4-5.
7. Dutta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, p. 312.
8. Dutta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, p. 314 & 325.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 322-324.
10. Belongs to village Done, Police Station Darauli, Saran.

11. Belongs to village Raphipur, Siwan, Saran.
12. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, p. 326.
13. *The Searchlight*, February 20, 1920.
14. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, pp. 358-359.
15. *The Searchlight*, March 24, 1921.
16. Prasad, Rajendra, *Atmakatha*, p. 134.
17. File No. 58 of 1921, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*
21. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, p. 335.
22. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, p. 212.
23. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, p. 368.
24. Bamford, P. C., *History of the Non-Cooperation and Khilafat Movement*, printed by Government of India, p. 27.
25. *The Non-Cooperation and Khilafat Movement in Bihar and Orissa*, p. 58.
26. *The Searchlight*, August 7, 1921.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*
29. *The Searchlight*, August 10, 1921.
30. *The Searchlight*, August 21, 1921.
31. Dighwara is in Sadar Sub-division of Chapra.
32. *The Searchlight*, August 31, 1921.
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Ibid.*
35. Majumdar, R.C., *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, pp. 124-125.
36. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, p. 215.
37. Dutta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, p. 383.
38. *The Searchlight*, September 7, 1921.
39. *Ibid.*
40. Majumdar, R. C., *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, p. 120.
41. He was the son-in-law of the veteran Congress leader, Mazharul Haque.
42. *The Non-Cooperation and Khilafat Movement in Bihar and Orissa*, p. 65.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

44. *The Searchlight*, November 11, 1921.
45. File No. 516 of 1921, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
46. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, pp. 218-119.
- The Searchlight*, November 6, 1921,
47. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, p. 399.
48. *Ibid.*
49. *The Searchlight*, November, 23, 1921.
50. *Ibid.*, November 20, 1921.
51. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, pp. 401-402.
52. File No. 541 of 1921, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
53. *Ibid.*
- Extract from the report of Superintendent of Police, Purnea, dated the 8th December 1921.
54. *The Searchlight*, December 21, 1921.
55. *Ibid.*
56. *Ibid.*
57. *Ibid.*, December 21, 1921.
58. *Ibid* January 15, 1922.
59. Majumdar, R. C., *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, p. 167.
60. *The Searchlight*, January 11, 1922.
61. *Ibid.*, January 11, 1922.
62. File No. 46 of 1922, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
63. Superintendent of Police, Saran.
64. File No. 46 of 1922, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
65. *The Searchlight*, December 30, 1921.
66. *Ibid.*
67. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, p. 407.
68. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, p. 409.
69. Manager of the Marhaura Sugar Factory, District Saran.
70. File No. 16 of 1922, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
71. *The Searchlight*, January 18, 1922.
72. *Ibid*, January 22, 1922.
73. *Ibid*, January 27, 1922.
74. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I. p. 233.
75. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol I, p. 416.
76. Near Gorakhpur in U.P.
77. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, pp. 135-236.



78. *The Searchlight*, February 15, 1922.
79. *Ibid.*, April 78, 1922.
80. *Ibid.*
81. *Ibid.*, May 5, 1922.
82. File No. 18 (April), 1922. Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
83. *The Searchlight*, July 19, 1922.
84. *Ibid.*
85. *The Searchlight*, September 3, 1922.
86. *Ibid.*
87. File No. 486 of 1922, Bihar Political (Special) Department, *The Searchlight*, November 8, 1922.
88. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, pp. 250-251.  
Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, pp. 431-433.
89. *The Non-Cooperation and Khilafat Movement in Bihar and Orissa*, p. 122.
90. File No. 25 (March) of 1923, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
91. *The Searchlight*, April 18 and 23, 1923.
92. File No. 25 (December), 1923, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
93. File No. 25 (May), 1924, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
94. File No. 25 (June), 1924, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
95. Rajendra Prasad, *Atmakatha*, p. 243.
96. File No. 112 (January), 1925, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
97. A Sadhu of Parsa Mathia, Police Station Ekma, Saran.
98. File No. 159 of 1925, extract from the letter of Mr. P. Meerza, District Officer, Saran, dated 30th April 1925, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
99. File No. 159 of 1925, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
100. *Ibid.*
101. Dutta, K.K., *Gandhiji in Bihar*, 1969.
102. Appendix—II.
103. File No. 77 of 1925, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
104. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, p. 491.
105. Datta, K.K., *Gandhiji in Bihar*, pp. 127-128.
106. *Young India*, 27th January, 1927.

107. Datta, K.K., *Gandhiji in Bihar*. p. 128.
108. Majumdar, R.C., *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, p. 308,
109. File No. 1 of 1928 (February), Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
110. Information obtained on the basis of personal interview with Jhulan Singh of village Hajiapore, P.S. Gopalganj. He was also present on the platform.
111. File No. 55 of 1929, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
112. File No. 17 of 1929 (January), Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
113. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. II, pp. 14-15.
114. Extract from Bihar & Orissa Police Abstract, para 420, 1929.
115. File No. 216 of 1929, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
116. Kateyan is a village in Gopalganj Sub-division. It has a police station also.
117. Extract from Bihar and Orissa Police Abstract of Intelligence, No. 22 dated 1st June 1929, para-420.
118. File No. 167 of 1929, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
119. File No. 91 of 1930, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
120. *Ibid.*
121. Fortnightly report from the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa, for the second half of December 1929.
122. Dutta, K.K., *Writings and Speeches of Gandhiji Relating to Bihar*, p. 24.

## IV

### **SARAN AND THE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT (1930-1934)**

The Indian National Congress organised the Civil Disobedience Movement in pursuance of the resolution passed at its Lahore session in December 1929. By another resolution the attainment of *Purna Swarajya* (complete independence) was declared to be the chief objective of the Congress. It was also laid down that this resolution was to be adopted in public meetings throughout the country on the 26th January 1930 and that day was declared as 'Independence Day' !

In pursuance of the resolution of the Lahore session of the Indian National Congress, on the 20th January 1930, Rajendra Prasad, Shri Krishna Sinha, J. B. Sen, Ram Narian Singh, Mathura Prasad, issued<sup>2</sup> on behalf of Bihar Provincial Congress Committee a joint communique indicating the procedure of the celebration of "Independence Day" on the 26th January, 1930. The communique ran as follows :

- “(1) The National Flag should be hoisted at 8 in the morning at the place where the meeting is to be held. In the evening the flag should be taken down only after the meeting is over.
- (2) After the flag is hoisted in the morning, the people should busy themselves with either of the following

activities and should not waste even a minute of their time :

- (a) As many as possible houses should be visited and Congress resolution be explained to the people and members be enrolled for the year 1930.
  - (b) Hawking of *khaddar*.
  - (c) *Charkha* spinning.
  - (d) Enrolment of volunteers. They should be habitual wearers of khadi and should have signed the Congress pledge.
  - (e) Work for the uplift of untouchables, e.g. taking them into the temples, allowing them free use of wells, etc.
  - (f) Prohibition.
- (3) To hold a meeting exactly at 5 in the evening. Therein a prominent Congress worker should read out to the people assembled, the statement issued by the President of the Congress, slowly and distinctly, and the sense of the meeting should be taken by show of hands, as to how many of them are willing to support the declaration. No speech should be delivered in the meeting.

**Note :** An accurate report as to the number of persons attending the meeting and the number of those who vote for the declaration, as also the general atmosphere prevailing in the meeting and the amount of constructive work done in the course of the day, should be sent without delay to the Provincial Congress Committee Office at Patna.

The report on no account should be exaggerated or glossed over."

The British authorities in India were not sitting idle. They were closely watching the tenor of political development after the Lahore session of the Indian National Congress. When the Provincial Congress Committee issued directives to the different District Congress Committees, the authorities in Bihar also took appropriate steps in order to counteract the move of the Congress workers regarding the celebration of 'Independence'

Day' on the 26th January 1930. The Bihar Government issued a letter to all the Divisional Commissioners on the 21st January 1930 containing the following guidelines for the District Magistrates and Superintendents of Police<sup>3</sup> :

"There should be no general prohibition which might play into the hands of extremists anxious to pose in public as martyrs oppressed by a tyrannous government. Nor is it desirable that an excuse should be given to Congressmen to say that they are persecuted for holding political opinions. Meetings held for the purpose of giving expressions to the idea of 'Independence' may be regarded as a safety valve for discharging superfluous steam. Government desire, therefore, that there should be no avoidable clash, but that toleration to avoid this should not extend a reasonable point. Thus in regard to licenses these need not be granted if the object of the meeting is explained by the organisers in clearly seditious terms which they refuse to alter. Thus for example a procession to end in a meeting to explain the message of Congress should not be treated as specifically seditious, but a procession to celebrate the severance of the British connection should be so regarded....

"In view of the Congress "Independence" resolution, slogans such as 'Long Live Revolution' and of course 'Down with the British Raj' or 'Down with the Union Jack' should be treated as breaches of the conditions of the license. On the other hand, cries which are not definitely seditious, such as 'Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai' or even 'Up with Independence' or 'Down with Imperialism', which convey very little meaning, would be better ignored unless the procession is getting out of hand and riotous generally....

"As the Government of India will presumably wish to know immediately how Independence Day passes off in the Province, any incident of importance should be reported direct by District Magistrates at once by telegram, in cipher or enclair according to their discretion. If no report is received by midday on the 27th, it will be assumed that there is nothing to report".

The district of Saran also celebrated the Independence Day with great enthusiasm. At Chapra at 8 a.m. Syed Mahmood,

President of Saran Congress Committee and the General Secretary of the Indian National Congress, hoisted the National Flag with great enthusiasm on the Ram Lilla Mathia ground. In the afternoon according to the programme a mass meeting was held at the same place which represented all sections of people. About five to six thousand people participated in celebrating the function. The 'Independence Declaration' was read out and the National Flag was then taken down.<sup>4</sup>

The Independence Day was also celebrated with eclat in village Jagarnatha, Bathua Bazar, Asandapur, Sankhey, Pokharvinda, and Surwania in the Manganj police station of Saran district.<sup>5</sup>

At Ekma, the Independence Day was observed under the auspices of the local Congress Committee. At 8 a.m. National Flag was hoisted after which batches of Congress workers visited every house of the locality and explained the Congress programme and enrolled Congress members and volunteers. In the afternoon a big procession paraded all the local streets and adjacent villages. The audience saluted the National Flag and then the meeting terminated with shouts of "Long Live Independent India".<sup>6</sup>

At Siwan, from dawn people were seen going to the river to take their solemn bath singing national songs, invoking the sons and daughters of the country to rise from their slumber and make themselves ready to liberate their enchained Mother. The sun rose and the people began to flock at Shradha Nand Bazar to take part in the hoisting ceremony of the National Flag which was punctually done at 8 a.m. by Pandit Ramrakasha Upadhya. The meeting was held at 5 p. m. Rajendra Prasad was late in coming as he had to attend several other meetings. Pandit Ramraksha read out the 'Declaration' in a loud voice. Shortly after he had finished, Rajendra Prasad came on the dais and explained the purport of the 'Declaration', in the Bhojpuri dialect. The 'Declaration', was unanimously adopted by show of hands. Hundreds of small flags were sold. National Flags were hoisted on the local *Khadi Bhandar* building and also on many private houses.<sup>7</sup>

At village Jajore (Siwan) the National Flag was hoisted at 8 a.m. A procession with band was taken into the nook and corner of the village. In the afternoon the meeting was held under the presidentship of Basudeo Narayan Sinha and the 'Declaration' was read out by Rajendra Prasad. The 'Declaration' was unanimously accepted by show of hands. The Bihar police was quite alert on this occasion. From morning to evening they kept a close watch over such processions and meetings. In spite of all this the Independence Day celebrations passed off peacefully.<sup>8</sup>

In the village of Bakhara (Saran) Pandit Adya Saran Pandey took the lead in celebrating the Independence Day in a befitting manner. There was much enthusiasm and every house of the village was adorned with National Flags. The villages of Dumri and Bhatti of Saran also observed the Independence Day with great zeal.<sup>9</sup>

Though the Independence Day was celebrated on the 26th January 1930, without any apparent obstruction from the police, still the village of Sisai (near Gorea Kothi) in Siwan Sub-division of the district of Saran, had to undergo the rancour of the police administration. The people of this village showed greater enthusiasm. Revolutionary speeches were made by Narain Prasad Singh (Ex-M. L.A.) and Chandrika Sinha and Pandit Adya Saran Pandey which excited the people and there was some sort of clash between the police and the people. The district administration imposed a collective fine of rupees ten thousand on the villagers for their acts of violence which the villagers refused to pay.<sup>10</sup>

The celebration of Independence Day at Dighwara (under Chapra Sub-division) was unprecedented in its history. More than five thousands of people attended the meeting. Such a huge gathering was unparalleled in the history of this thana even in the Non-cooperation days of 1921. It was all due to the ceaseless efforts and inspiring leadership of Ram Binod Sinha, the President of the Dighwara Thana Congress Committee. Hiralal Sharaff, Narbada Prasad, Basant Lal and several others co-operated with Ram Binod Sinha in this mission. In the early hours of morning meetings were held in every

village in which Ram Binod Sinha explained the message of the Lahore Congress to the people. As a consequence of such an effort, Dighwara witnessed a scene of unparalleled enthusiasm on the Independence Day. At 8 a. m. National Flag was hoisted by Ram Binod Sinha. In the afternoon the 'Declaration' was read out by him. The declaration was unanimously adopted by show of hands by the audience present in the meeting.<sup>11</sup>

Thus the 'Independence Day' was enthusiastically celebrated in the whole of Saran district. There was spontaneous demonstration everywhere in the district and large number of people took the pledge of Independence with great solemnity.

After the Lahore Congress of 1929, the problem of Mass Civil Disobedience was drawing the attention of the well-wishers of the Congress programme. As Bihar is an inland area having no sea-coast and here people manufactured salt only on a small scale as a by-product while preparing saltpetre out of earth at some localities, Rajendra Prasad sought Mahatma Gandhi's permission to start Satyagraha in Bihar by non-payment of Chaukidari tax which every household in a village had to pay for the maintenance of the village Chaukidars. But Mahatma Gandhi's reply was "not to attempt it, at any rate to begin with, as the Government would come down with a heavy hand and it was possible the people might not be able to stand the pressure that would follow non-payment of the Chaukidari tax".<sup>12</sup>

In this connection, Jaleshwar Prasad (of village Raphipur, Saran) published a letter addressed to the Editor of the *Searchlight* on 12th February 1930, and endorsed the programme of non-payment of taxes, and he informed that "through the efforts of Babu Ram Binod Singh and his faithful band of workers, the Dighwara Police Station is being prepared for a campaign of non-payment of taxes in the district of Saran".<sup>13</sup>

After the publication of this letter, the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa in his letter (D.O No.433/C) dated the 19th February, 1930, sought the information from the Commissioner of Tirhut Division,



Muzaffarpur : "...Would you please let me know whether there is any reason favouring a campaign in that police station (i.e. Dighwara) and what the position is actually at present" ?<sup>14</sup> The Commissioner of Tirhut Division replied on the 6th March, 1930 on the basis of information received from Mr. S.A. Khan, District Magistrate of Saran,<sup>15</sup> who had informed the former on the 27th February 1930, in his letter (D.O. No. 75/C) that "there is no special reason why Dighwara police station should be chosen for a campaign of non-payment of taxes except this that Ram Binod Sinha, an active political worker, resides in its jurisdiction and is rather too well-known to the residents".<sup>16</sup>

The patriotic zeal of the people of Saran was quite remarkable. About 6252 Congress members and 147 volunteers had joined the national movement by the middle of February, 1930.<sup>17</sup>

A case was started under section 108 Cr. P.C. against Mahendra Singh of Manikapore (Gopalganj Police Station) for an objectionable speech made by him at Pachrukhi (Siwan) on March 4, 1930, in which he had called the British Government a demon, a dacoit, and white-skinned leeches.<sup>18</sup>

Mahendra Singh, Narayan Prasad Singh, Pandit Girish Tiwary, Chandrika Singh, Adya Saran Pandey and Bharat Mishra made an extensive tour of the villages under Bhorey, Kateyan and Kuchaikote police stations of Saran district. The effect of all these was that the people of this district expressed their firm determination to follow their leaders.<sup>19</sup>

Indra Raman Shastri, an important political leader of Saran, addressed several meetings in the district viz. the District Board compound, Chapra, on the 17th March 1930, Manjha-Matkar, police station Mairwa on the 22nd March 1930, village Baradaha, police station Darauli on 23rd March and at Darauli on the 24th March 1930. In all the meetings he spoke against the British Government. On the 31st March 1930, the Superintendent of Police, Saran, requested the District Magistrate of Chapra to pass an order under Section 108 Cr. P.C. against Pandit Indra Raman Shastri. On the 11th April 1930, the District Magistrate of Saran, Mr. S.A. Khan, I.C.S.

ordered Indra Raman Shastri to execute a bond of Rs. 1000/- with two securities of the like amount to maintain good behaviour for a period of 6 months, u/s 108 Cr. P.C. In default of execution of the bond he was to undergo 6 months simple imprisonment. But Shastri did not execute any such bond and preferred to go to jail.<sup>21</sup>

In the meantime the Working Committee of All India Congress Committee met at Sabarmati from February 14 to 16, 1930, and authorised Mahatma Gandhi to start Civil Disobedience Movement whenever he so desired. Mahatma Gandhi decided to launch the Satyagraha campaign by manufacturing salt at Dandi, a village in Gujarat, which was about 200 miles from Sabarmati.<sup>22</sup>

On March 12, 1930, Mahatma Gandhi with seventy-nine male and female workers left the Sabarmati Ashram on foot and reached the sea at Dandi on 5th April.<sup>23</sup> But according to Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Mahatma Gandhi had left the Ashram with only seventy five volunteers.<sup>24</sup>

The All India Congress Committee met at Ahmedabad on March 21, 1930. It endorsed the resolution of the Working Committee and also expressed the hope that "the whole country will respond to the action taken by Gandhi" and authorised "the Provincial Congress Committee to organise and undertake such Civil Disobedience as to them may seem proper and in the manner that may appear to them to be most suitable".<sup>25</sup>

The Bihar Provincial Congress Committee also met at Sadaqat Ashram, Patna, under the presidentship of Rajendra Prasad on the 30th March 1930, to devise ways and means for the implementation of the resolution passed in the meeting of the Congress Committee at Ahmedabad on March 21, 1930. It was unanimously decided that as soon as Mahatma Gandhi was arrested or if he issued any signal to start Civil Disobedience movement, the Provincial Congress would at once respond to it and the movement be started. It is rather significant that the two districts that were given priority over others for starting

the movement were Saran and Champaran in the whole of the Province of Bihar. It was also proposed to enrol atleast fifty thousand volunteers in the province and for the district of Saran the target fixed was six thousand volunteers. Sixty-one members of the Provincial Congress Committee signed the volunteers pledge amongst whom the following belonged to the district of Saran ;

1. Rajendra Prasad
2. Narayan Prasad Sinha
3. Jaleshwar Prasad
4. Mathura Prasad
5. Rambilash Sharma.<sup>26</sup>

Besides this, the following resolutions were adopted by the Provincial Congress Committee :

1. "This committee offers its warm congratulations to those of its members who have been made victims of Government's repression and hopes that the work of *Swarajya* will gain greater strength, instead of any slackness coming over to it, on account of their convictions.

2. "This committee resolved that the District Congress Committees and the committees subordinate to them should vigorously work to prepare the masses for Civil Disobedience and non-payment of taxes and should enrol as many volunteers as possible for the purpose.

3. "It also resolved that civil disobedience of salt laws should at once be started at such places where it is considered proper to do so as soon as Mahatma Gandhi is arrested or signal is given by him or by the All India Congress Committee or by the President of the Provincial Congress Committee to do so.

4. "It further resolved that this committee gives sole power to its President to take such steps or issue such instructions to the subordinate committees, to *satyagrahi* volunteers and to the people at large as one thought necessary and desirable for the conduct of the Satyagraha campaign in the province. These instructions will be as much binding on them and are as much

to be obeyed as the resolutions of the Provincial Congress Committee.

"In the event of the present president being arrested, the persons acting in his place will enjoy equal power.

5. "In view of the fact that vacancies may occur in the Provincial Congress Committee on account of the arrest of its member or members, and there may be difficulties ordinarily in filling up these vacancies strictly according to the rules, this committee, therefore, resolves that in order that the work of *satyagraha* may continue unhampered, the President will have powers to nominate his own successor in the event of his arrest, as also person or persons to fill up the vacancies in the Working Committee.

6. "This committee impresses upon the people the desirability of observing Hartal everywhere in the province as soon as the news of the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi is received".<sup>27</sup>

On the next day (31st March, 1930) of this momentous meeting, Saran was the first district in Bihar which was visited by the President of the Indian National Congress, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and his illustrious wife, Kamla Nehru. Long before the arrival of the train, huge crowd had gathered on the railway platform of Chapra Junction. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, on his arrival at Chapra station at 6 a.m. on 31st March, 1930, was received amongst others by Syed Mahmood, Jagarnath Saran, the Chairman of the Reception Committee, Mahendra Prasad, Chandradeo Narayan, Bankey Bihari, Jaleshwar Prasad, Narayan Prasad and others. Pandit Nehru and Kamla Nehru were taken in a specially decorated car to the house of Syed Mahmood. There was a crowded programme for them for the whole day. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru accompanied by Mahmood covered a distance of about 150 miles on motor car in course of which Pandit Nehru addressed huge meetings at Dighwara, Parsa, Amnour, Baniapore, Goreakothi. In all these meetings the gathering was between five to fifteen thousand.<sup>28</sup>

Pandit Nehru came back to Chapra at about 8 p.m. A huge public meeting, the like of which Chapra had never

witnessed before, was held in the Municipal compound. The gathering was more than twenty thousand. The first who addressed the meeting was Mrs. Kamla Nehru. She said that Bihar was the only province where the evil of *purdah* was most rampant. It was time now when women of Bihar should come out and help men in their struggle for freedom. After Mrs. Nehru, Jaleswar Prasad informed about the decision of the Provincial Congress Committee that the district of Saran and Champaran have been selected in this province to lead the Civil Disobedience campaign which would be started by disobeying the Salt-law. Besides, the people of these districts might also resort to non-payment of *Chaukidari*-tax when the time demanded. He warned the government that if it did not come to its senses in time they might undertake new forms of civil disobedience i.e. breaking of railway laws etc. He further asked the people to travel without ticket, for it were the railways which were responsible for discrimination in freight rates so as to facilitate the import of finished goods into India and export of raw materials outside India.<sup>29</sup>

The next speaker was 'Bihar Bhushan' (then called), Rajendra Prasad "without whom the meeting could not have been kept in control." He asked the people to concentrate in the first instance, in breaking salt law but if time required they would also take up *Chaukidari* tax. He again asked the people not to be afraid of the law of sedition which was in his opinion a dead letter then. He said that the Congress was going to enrol fifty thousand volunteers in Bihar for *satyagraha* and the district of Saran, which was also his home district, should contribute the largest quota of six thousand volunteers for the purpose.<sup>30</sup>

After Rajendra Prasad, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru came to address the people. He was given a thunderous ovation. Four 'Addresses' were presented to him by the Chapra Municipality, District Congress Committee of Saran, Lokmanya Samiti, Chapra, and by the citizens of Chapra. Pandit Nehru began by saying that he was a rebel and he was out to preach open rebellion against the British Government. He told the audience that time was soon coming when there

would be only two parties in the country, one supporting the freedom of the country and the other supporting the government. No one could keep himself neutral. True loyalty consisted in being sincere to the motherland. But the present day loyalty was a treason to the country and every body should feel ashamed of calling himself loyal. He ended his speech by appealing to the people to join Congress in large numbers without minding the sacrifices.<sup>31</sup> The visit of Pandit Nehru and his wife did produce tremendous enthusiasm amongst the people of Saran district. Their presence in Chapra town sent forth a thrill of enthusiasm amongst all people of Saran district and their feelings of nationalism were greatly strengthened.

The Congress leaders of Saran now directed all their energies towards educating and preparing the people for the coming civil disobedience movement. The district leaders visited those places where they wielded influence with the people and advised them to get themselves ready for the movement.

Pashupati Singh of the Lokmanya Samiti, Nayatola, Chapra, visited villages under Garkha police station in the last week of March, 1930, and addressed the meetings with lantern slides. He visited the following villages viz. Akhtiarpur, Sadhupur, Saidsarai, Sahosarai, Sargattee, Phulwaria, Aloni, Kamalpur, Motirajpore, Dharambaghi, and Carkha. He exhorted the people to join the Congress organisation and enrol themselves as *satyagrahi*. As a result, a large number of people joined the Congress and enrolled themselves as *satyagrahis*.<sup>32</sup>

In pursuance to the directives of the Provincial Congress Committee, the district leaders of Saran now started the Salt *satyagraha*. Pandit Bharat Mishra, Sanchalak, Saran *satyagraha* Sangram Samiti, Chapra, addressed the following letter to the District Magistrate of Saran :

“Sir.

You may be aware that the Indian National Congress has decided to launch a campaign of Civil Disobedience for independence of India. Mahatma Gandhi, under authority given by the Congress, has written to the Viceroy explaining at length the reasons for the very serious action the Congress has decided ]

to take.....In pursuance of the same policy it has been decided to start Civil Disobedience in this district by committing breach of salt laws i.e. by making or dealing with contraband salt at the following places from the dates mentioned below. Instructions have been given to *satyagrahis* to commit such breaches and also to maintain absolute non-violence :

*Name of place*                      *Date of commencement of satyagraha*

Bareja	6th April, 1930
Goreakothi	7th April, 1930
Hajiapore	8th April, 1930". <sup>33</sup>

The above information was confirmed by Rajendra Prasad who announced on 5th April, 1930, from Sadaqat Ashram, Patna, that Civil Disobedience against salt laws would be launched at three centres in Saran district viz., Bareja, Goreakothi, and Hajiapore from 6th April 1930. He also cautioned that "for successful performance of this great *yajna*, which the country is going to embark tomorrow, complete non-violence in spirit and action is absolutely necessary. I hope and trust that this will be borne in mind not only by the *satyagrahis* but also by others who may not be taking part in *satyagraha*. Bihar prides itself on being regarded as devoted to the Congress and to the personality of Mahatma Gandhi. Let us hope that it proves itself worthy of the confidence placed in its capacity of humble service and sacrifice. Let us in all humility bend our knees before the Almighty to give us strength to go through the fiery ordeal".<sup>34</sup>

The British Government was watching these developments with great concern. It decided to deal with the situation with firmness. On 5th April 1930, Mr. A.E. McDowell, Deputy Inspector-General of Police (C.I.D.), Patna, ordered Mr. M. A. Mackenzie, Superintendent of Police, Saran : "Go to the spot on the 6th with a force sufficient to enable you to carry out your intentions. Approach the party of salt manufacturers and enquire what they up to. They will of course say that they are making salt. Tell them that it cannot be allowed and enquire who is/are the leader/leaders of the party. Arrest

him/them but only actual ring leaders, and not the rank and file and confiscate implements, utensils and materials, e.g. *kodalis*, pots, and pans, used for the manufacture of salt and then clear out. Next day a Deputy Superintendent of Police or an Inspector would repeat the procedure. You can take Goreakothi on 7th and Hajiapore on 8th, unless of course your presence is needed elsewhere, in which case a Deputy Superintendent of police or failing him an Inspector should carry out the programme. In order to enable you to cope with any trouble that may arise the Inspector-General is sending you a force of 50 armed Police Reserve".<sup>35</sup>

On 6th of April 1930, the first day of the National Week Celebration to commemorate the memory of the Jallianwala-bagh Tragedy—after a night of fasting and prayers, Gandhiji broke the salt law by picking up salt on sea shore. Thus, a British law was defied in a non-violent manner. It was a signal for starting the mass movement in the different parts of the country.<sup>36</sup>

The movement spread like wild fire. It set the whole country ablaze. In Saran, on 6th April, 1930, in the evening, three batches of volunteers forty-one in number left Chapra for Bareja, Goreakothi and Hajiapore, the centres selected for offering salt *satyagraha*. An hour before the train time i.e. at 5 p.m. the citizens of Chapra gathered on the Town Hall grounds to give this "army of peace" a hearty send off. The volunteers were photographed. Dr. Syed Mahmood, Narayan Prasad Sinha and Pandit Bharat Mishra, commander of Satyagraha army, in short speeches, exhorted the soldiers of liberty to remain non-violent in the face of the gravest provocation. Audience were moved to tears. The volunteers were sumptuously fed by Pandit Jagarnath Mishra, Bhagwan Sahu, Gulab Sahu and others of Chapra town. At 6 p.m. the General sounded the whistle and the 'army' marched to the station accompanied by people gathered at the Town Hall. The volunteers were given *Sarbat* on the way by the shop-keepers. The gathering at the station numbered about five thousand. Nineteen volunteers were booked for Bareja, eleven for Goreakothi, and eleven for Hajiapore.<sup>37</sup>



Pandit Rajeshwar Tiwary alias Sawalia Babu and others with about one thousand men received the volunteers at Daudpur station with playing of the band. At 9 p.m. the party reached Bareja. A mammoth meeting was held in which Pandit Girish Tiwary asked the people to be ready for action.<sup>38</sup>

A batch of policemen along with a number of Chaukidars went to village Bareja in order to control the situation created by the salt *satyagrahis*. An attitude of apathy and non-cooperation was adopted by the local people. This was manifested when the police could not get anything in the market to satisfy their hunger, even though they were prepared to pay Rs 2/- for a *seer* of *puri* which was then available at the rate of annas eight (fifty paise) only for a *seer*. It demonstrated the utter apathy of the local people with the police and a feeling of sympathy and solidarity with the *satyagrahis*.<sup>39</sup>

On the 6th April, 1930, preparation of salt started at Bareja<sup>40</sup> at 9 p.m. A good quantity of salt was prepared during the night. In the morning of the 7th April a batch of *satyagrahis* went out in search of raw materials for manufacturing salt. Another batch was deputed for doing propaganda in the surrounding villages. Some police spies visited the scene of operation on the morning and carefully inspected the *karah* (boiling pot) and hearth. On the same day (i. e. 7th April, 1930) by 10 a.m. locally manufactured salt was sold worth Rupees fourteen and three paise only.<sup>41</sup>

On the 7th April 1930, Baban Singh, the Naik (leader) of the Bareja camp was arrested. He nominated Brijnandan as his successor but this man was also arrested by the police. Then Brijnandan nominated Sakhichand Sahu as his successor. The police did not find anything to eat. *Puris* and other eatables were sent from Chapra by car for them. Such a great apathy was shown to the police by the local people that not even ropes were given to them to draw water from the well. The local zamindars whose lands were utilized by the police for their temporary abode, asked the policemen to vacate them immediately. The military police had already shifted to the premises of Jaintpore High English School.<sup>42</sup>

Baban Singh and Brajnandan were tried on 8th April, 1930, by the then Sub-Divisional Officer, Sadar, Chapra. They were convicted under section 9 of the Salt Act. Each was sentenced to undergo six months simple imprisonment. In order to express their sympathy with the convicts, a majority of students of the local schools in Chapra town went on strike on the 8th April, 1930, and they paraded the streets shouting "Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai", "Jawaharlal Nehru Ki Jai" etc. It is also significant to note that not a single taxi could be available to convey the above two convicts to jail. In order to avoid demonstration by the people in the streets, however, they were sent to jail in S.P.'s car.<sup>43</sup>

At Goreakothi<sup>44</sup> on 7th April 1930, at 2 p.m. the *satyagrahis*, led by Pandit Bharat Mishra, marched through the village roads in a procession followed by one thousand men. At 3.30 p.m. the *satyagrahis* reached the field of operation. Several *Kothis* were built from before where salt water was kept. They began to boil the salt water amidst shout of *Bande Mataram* and *Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai* in order to prepare salt. The Superintendent of Police, the Sub-Deputy Magistrate, the Inspector of Police and the Sub-Inspector of Police with a posse of 29 armed police and a host of Chowkidars were present there. More than five thousand people had gathered to see the non-violent fight for freedom. Narayan Prasad Singh urged upon the volunteers and the audience to be non-violent under all circumstances. The enthusiasm of the people knew no bounds. Mahatma Jagannath Das of Chainpore Pipra, took the responsibility of feeding all the *satyagrahis* as long as *satyagraha* continued. Maulvi Syed Sajjad Hussain of Mustafabad, enlisted himself as a volunteer. The audience were perfectly peaceful. When the salt water was half boiled, the Superintendent of Police, who was watching everything from a distance, went to Narayan Prasad Sinha and asked him "who is the leader?" "The leader is there among them" was the reply. Then he hurried up to the volunteers "who amongst you is the leader?" asked the Superintendent of Police. "I am the leader", replied Saryug Lall. "What are you doing?" was the second question. "We are preparing salt". "Do you know the law about it"? "Yes, we know and we are out to break it."

"What is your name?" "My name is Saryug Lall". "Well, come on", he caught hold of Saryug Lall and went away. After he had gone a few yards, he muttered something to his companions and left him (Saryug Lall). Then he ordered the armed police to demolish the *kothis* and *chulhas*. The police demolished the *kothis* and *chulhas*. The fire was extinguished by water, the fuel thrown away and the *karah* in which salt water was being boiled and the bucket and the bricks of *chulha* were taken away in the motor car. The *satyagrahis* remained non-violent and their conduct was exemplary throughout.<sup>45</sup>

Then the whole batch of armed police and the officers left the place amidst thundering cries of *Bande Mataram* and *Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai* from the audience. The *satyagrahis* continued the operation till 7 p.m. This helplessness and sad plight of the government officials created great impact upon the public. The complete social boycott of all the government servants were enforced by the public. The Police Sub-Inspector with his staff had to sit under a small *sisam* tree for the whole day in the hot sun.<sup>46</sup>

At Hajiapore<sup>17</sup> the salt law was broken on 8th April 1930. After an interval of about twenty minutes, the Sub-Divisional Officer arrived on the spot and ordered the Sub-Inspector of Police to arrest Pandit Bharat Mishra, President, Saran District War Council. The Sub-Inspector arrested him. Panditji kept on smiling. He made over the badge and the bugle of generalship to Mahamaya Prasad Sinha in the presence of nearly four thousand people. Pandit Bharat Mishra nominated Chandrika Singh as the *Senapati* of the district in his place.<sup>48</sup>

The students and teachers of Goreakothi High English School also participated in the manufacturing of salt. The Superintendent of Police, Saran, strongly recommended that the teachers of the said school be dismissed and the government aid be stopped.<sup>49</sup>

On April 8, 1930, two Chaukidars of Manjhi police station felt so much stirred by national feelings that they tendered their resignation from their service.<sup>50</sup>

At Bareja, on April 8, 1930, at 4.30 p.m. Awadh Bihari, Thakur Mishra, Sakhichand Sahu and Ramanand Pandey were arrested.<sup>51</sup>

Shri Narain Prasad Sinha, President, District Congress Committee, Saran, was also arrested on the same day (i.e. on 8th April) and was sentenced to one year simple imprisonment under section 9 and 14 of Salt Act 1882.<sup>52</sup>

On the arrest of the volunteers, there was complete *hartal* in the Chapra town. The students of Zila School and Visheshwar Seminary left the school in a body while there was a partial strike in Rajput School and Saran Academy.<sup>53</sup>

The most notable event on the 9th April 1930, was the voluntary and spontaneous resignation from their service of 9 Chaukidars and one Dafadar in Bareja area. All the Chaukidars and Dafadars were garlanded by Pandit Girish Tiwary. Syed Mahmood visited Bareja together with Jaleshwar Prasad, Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, Narbadeshwar Prasad and Mrityunjay Prasad (son of Rajendra Prasad). In a public meeting, attended by over one thousand men and two hundred women, they asked the Chaukidars, who had resigned, whether they had been persuaded or induced by any body to resign but their reply was in negative. None of them had anything to gain by resigning, except the peace of mind and escape from the tyranny of the *Darogaji* or his servants, as a Chaukidar put it. Syed Mahmood asked the people present if they were prepared to sacrifice to the extent that the government might force them to do. He was assured by a very large number of people that they were really prepared to sacrifice their all for the sake of their dear motherland. Syed Mahmood then told the people that now they were not required to show their enthusiasm by further demonstrations but they were to act as disciplined soldiers of freedom.<sup>54</sup>

The most touching scene was the farewell given by some 200 women of the villages near the *satyagraha* camp, Bareja, to their husbands, sons, brothers and other relatives to whom they gave *tikas* and garlanded them. They exhorted them to prove

worthy of themselves and sacrifice themselves if and when necessity arose at the altar of the dear motherland.<sup>55</sup>

In the meantime on April 9, Mahatma Gandhi circulated the following directives :

“Let every village fetch or manufacture contraband salt. Sisters should picket liquor shops, opium dens and foreign cloth dealers’ shops. Foreign cloth should be burnt. Hindus should eschew untouchability. Let students leave government schools and government servants resign their services”.<sup>56</sup>

It is evident from a letter (D.O.No. 850) dated the 12th April 1930 of the Superintendent of Police, Saran, which was addressed to Lt. Col. A.E.J.C. Mc Dowell, Deputy Inspector-General, C.I.D., Patna that on 10th April 1930, at Goreakothi, Syed Mahmood, Jaleshwar Prasad, Pleader, Mathura Prasad, and Mrityunjaya Prasad arrived from Chapra. Mathura Prasad told the audience that they should prepare salt without any fear and asked the Hindus and Mohammedans to unite in this movement.<sup>57</sup>

From the said letter it appears that on the 10th April at Hajipore eleven volunteers plus two women clad in khaddar entered the arena. When the police went to seize the *handis* (earthen pots) the volunteers mildly objected to it.

On April 11, 1930, Rajendra Prasad sent the following wire from Bhagalpur to Pandit Girish Tiwary ;

“CONGRATULATE SARAN ON ITS BRAVE STAND.  
START SATYAGRAHA AT ALL POSSIBLE PLACES”.

On receipt of this wire, the Superintendent of Police, Saran, wrote separately to the Deputy Inspector-General (C.I.D) suggesting the prosecution of Rajendra Prasad u/s 9 (c) of the Salt Act.<sup>58</sup>

On the 11th April 1930, Saryug Prasad, the leader of the volunteers at Goreakothi, was arrested and sentenced to six months’ simple imprisonment under section 9 (c) of the Salt Act.<sup>59</sup>

On the 13th April 1930, salt was manufactured at Bareja under the guidance of Pandit Girish Tiwary. About one thousand men and four hundred women were present there. The police arrived and arrested Padit Girish Tiwary and later he was sentenced to six months' simple imprisonment. He nominated Hiralal Saraff of Dighwara as his successor.<sup>60</sup>

Syed Mahmood brok salt law on the 13th April 1930, by making salt at his residence at Chapra and the salt was sold through auction.<sup>61</sup>

At Gandhi Kutir, Malkhachak (Dighwara), Saran, *satyagraha* was started by preparing contraband salt on the 13th April. The first batch of volunteers, led by Narbada Prasad, a local merchant broke the salt law. Volunteers were enrolled, salt prepared and hawked from door to door in villages and at the railway stations between Sonapur and Chapra. Volunteers sold the packets of contraband salt by crying loudly "*Gulami Hazam Karne Ki Puriya, Namak Ka Puriya Nahi Hai, Amrit Ka Puriya Hai.*" Purchase it and free yourself by breaking the shackles of slavery."<sup>62</sup>

Students of Dighwara were keenly interested in this campaign. A good number of them enlisted themselves as volunteers who prepared and sold contraband salt and carried the propaganda work in their right earnest in the neighbouring villages. Hiralal Saraff, a member of the Union Board, resigned his membership from the Board.<sup>63</sup>

Sonar, Kurmi, Kahar, Chamar, Dusadh and other backwards of Dighwara area held their caste meetings and decided to give up drinking. The Sonar of the locality decided to impose a fine of rupees eleven on one who will be found drinking and that the informant who informs the *Panchayat* will get rupees five out of the fine realised. The lead in this connection was taken by Basantlal Sahu of Dighwara and Jagannath Prasad Sahu of Manpur who held meetings every day of the different castes to root out the evil practice of drinking. Owners of palm trees of village Tirlokchak, Manpur, Dighwara and others of

surrounding area cut down the *bals* of the palms and thus rendered the trees useless for toddy purposes.<sup>64</sup>

Ram Binod Sinha, Pradeep Narain Sinha, Basantlal Sahu made earnest efforts in Dighwara Police Station towards this direction by resorting to mass disobedience. They prepared contraband salt while Janak Sinha, Ram Bahal Sinha, Pandit Nand Kumar Tripathy and others made arrangements for funds.<sup>65</sup>

At Mairwa, *satyagraha* began on the 13th April, 1930. Salt was prepared and sold there. The police came and tried to destroy the pots. Sometimes they succeeded and sometimes they failed.<sup>66</sup>

Rajendra Prasad, the then President of Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, issued an appeal to the people of Bihar on the 14th April 1930 (which appeared in the *Searchlight* dated 20th April, 1930) as to "How to treat policemen" :

"I hear that in the areas where *satyagraha* operations are going, the members of police are not getting foodstuffs or quarter for residence. I want to make it known to the public that we have no enmity with men in the police service although we are making all possible efforts to remove the government of which they consider themselves servants. Therefore, if a policeman in uniform, demands food or shelter authoritatively as the member of government he should on no account be provided with it. But in case he claims it as a matter of courtesy and obtains permission from the *Satyagraha* camp, officer or the lokal *sardar*, he should be supplied with all the necessary articles so that he may not be put to any trouble".

This appeal had its impact on the minds of the *satyagrahis* and the freedom-fighters of the Saran district.

On the 14th April 1930, after discussions with Maulvi Fakhrul Hassan Qadri, Sub-Divisional Officer, Gopalganj, S. A. Khan, District Officer, Saran, reported to the Commissioner, Tirhut Division, Muzaffarpur, that the arrest of Pandit Bharat Mishra at Hajiapore (Police Station Gopalganj) had created great excitement among the people.<sup>67</sup>

On the 15th April 1930, the Superintendent of Police, Saran, reported to the Deputy Inspector-General (C. I. D), Patna :

"I received by post a pinch of something which looked like dirty sand, enclosed in an envelope on which it was printed *Bareja Namak Satyagraha Sangram Ke Namune Ka Namak*. Along with the dirt was a slip of paper to the following effect :

To

The Superintendent of Police,

Kindly accept it and pay the bill :

Salt	-/4/-Annas
Stamp	-/1/-Anna
-----	
Total	-/5/-Annas.
	Sd/-Incharge

Satyagraha Camp-Bareja."<sup>68</sup>

At Chapra on the 16th April, 1930, the meeting of the District Congress Committee was held at the residence of Syed Mahmood at 2 p.m., since Narain Prasad Sinha, Indra Raman Shastri and Pandit Girish Tiwary were in jail. Pandit Jivanand Sharma was elected President, Firangi Singh, elected Vice-President and Hiralal Saraff of Dighwara was elected as Secretary of the Saran District Congress Committee.<sup>69</sup>

The War Council was dissolved and Chandrika Singh was appointed as a 'dictator' of the district. The Working Committee of the District Congress Committee was empowered to function as the War Council. The 'dictator' was given the authority to nominate his successor in case of his being removed by the government to take rest in the jail.<sup>70</sup>

Rajendra Prasad addressed a meeting in the Town Hall at Chapra, on the 16th April, 1930, and said that every one should make salt in his own house. He asked all students over fifteen years of age to become volunteers. Prof. Kripalani<sup>72</sup> also addressed the meeting and said that no law of government should be obeyed.<sup>72</sup>

It is evident from the police report that manufacture of salt was carried out at the following places in Saran district :

Bandhuhata—Police Station Barharia  
 Khorī Pakar—Police Station Barharia  
 Chitanpur —Police Station Darauli.<sup>73</sup>



In the meantime Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was arrested. His arrest aroused deep indignation amongst the people of Saran. There was a complete hartal at Dighwara Bazar on the 15th April 1930. The liquor and toddy shops were picketed.<sup>74</sup>

On the 16th April there was a complete hartal in Chapra town on account of Jawaharlal Nehru's arrest. Naked little boys wearing small *khaddar* coat, stopped pleaders and Mukhtars and requested them to stay away from court which was gladly accepted by most of them. There was complete strike of the students in the district.<sup>75</sup>

At Goreakothi, on the 16th April 1930, Rajendra Prasad and Prof. Kripalani, addressed a meeting and asked the women to come out of *Purdah* and help the movement.<sup>72</sup>

The villagers of Pahlejpur, and Sisai near Goreakothi decided to refuse payment of the additional police tax imposed by the British Government.<sup>76</sup>

The arrest of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru further embittered the feelings of the people of Bihar. It also brought about intensification of the *satyagraha* movement which is evident from the circular letter issued by Rajendra Prasad, President of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee :

"It is time now that *satyagraha* against the salt law should be given the form of a mass movement. It is, therefore, left within the discretion of every district to begin and carry on *satyagraha*. And to make it a mass movement, they are to conduct it in accordance with the following direction :

- (a) *satyagraha* should be launched in as many villages as possible.
- (b) Due attention should be paid to the refinement of salt as much as possible in order to make it fit for human consumption. In this connection the help of experts must be obtained. Not the violation of the law only but also the manufacture of eatable salt should be the important consideration.

- (c) Whatever quantity of salt is manufactured it should be sold to the poor in the villages at the lowest possible rates, while a little quantity of it may be auctioned in cities to obtain some money for conducting the satyagraha movement.
- (d) Whoever has enrolled himself in the satyagraha army should be directed in the first instance to manufacture salt in his own place provided there are facilities for it, and in case of want of such facilities he should be asked to go to the place where they are available.
- (e) The general public should be told that they should take up manufacture of salt after having thoroughly understood the salt law and know fully the consequences that are likely to follow its breach.
- (f) Wherever necessary the satyagrahis may employ "Noniyas"<sup>78</sup> even on wages, according to their needs, and manufacture salt. But this should be resorted to only where the satyagrahis are unable to manufacture salt themselves.
- (g) Pamphlets containing the above directions should be freely distributed in the villagers".<sup>79</sup>

The directives of Rajendra Prasad gave further impetus to the people. At Bareilly a meeting of the workers was held on the 18th April 1930, and it was decided to start some ten new centres within that circle for the manufacture of salt. So far thirty centres had already started at Goreakothi and six centres at Hajiapore.<sup>80</sup>

From village Baradaha, Police Station Darauli, the police constables were withdrawn on the 18th April, who were posted there to watch the *satyagraha* movement. On the same day in the evening, Narbada Prasad, Shiv Pratap Sahai, Mahamaya Prasad Sinha and Rudra Prasad visited the area and exhorted the people and the volunteers to continue the work unabated.<sup>81</sup>

In Police Station Ekma, and Chapra Mufassil the manufacture of contraband salt was started from the 19th April 1930. Parsa Police Station started work on the 20th April.

1930, after duly sending intimation to the District Magistrate on the 19th April 1930.<sup>82</sup>

On the 20th April 1930, Mr. S.A. Khan, District Magistrate, Saran, informed Mr. A.P. Middleton, Commissioner, Tirhut Division, Muzaffarpur, that according to the report of Mr. Mazumdar, Sub-Divisional Officer, Siwan, the manufacturing of salt had been started in the areas of Darauli, Mairwa, Siwan, Raghunathpur, Barharia, and Basantpur Police Stations of Siwan Sub-division.<sup>83</sup>

By this time, several *satyagraha* centres had already been opened throughout the district. At Sonapur and Ekma it was started on the 22nd April 1930, and at Aphar, Vikrampur and Dharahara, it was started on 23rd, and 24th April under the supervision of Basudeo Narain Sinha.<sup>84</sup>

At Siwan on 23rd April 1930, a batch of *satyagrahi* volunteers under the leadership of Pandit Ram Raksha Upadhyaya paraded the streets of the town and they were entertained at many places with *sharbat* etc. For the whole night the volunteers collected saline earth. Next day exactly at 4 p.m. salt *satyagraha* was started. As soon as fire was lit, the Police Inspector arrived with three Sub-Inspectors and twenty-five Constables and arrested Pandit Ram Raksha Upadhyaya and ordered the constables to snatch away the *handis* (earthen pots). But the volunteers lay flat on the ground and consequently they could not take away the *handis*, though some were broken by the constables with their *lathis*. Police constables dragged the volunteers but in the end, had to give it up as the volunteers remained strictly non-violent. For this Pandit Ram Raksha Upadhyaya was awarded 6 months rigorous imprisonment. As a protest against this action of the government complete *hartal* was observed at Siwan on the 24th April 1930.<sup>85</sup>

At Chapra, the salt *satyagraha* was started on the 24th April 1930, at 6 p.m. in the presence of two thousand persons. The volunteers started from the Town Hall, after they were addressed by Jaleshwar Prasad, Shiv Pratap Sahai, Mahamaya Prasad Sinha and Pandit Rambilash Sharma. The students

played an important role in it. Madan Mohan Verma, read out a poem on the life and doings of Babu Kunwar Singh.<sup>86</sup> He was followed by Thakur Nath Prasad, a student of Saran Academy, Chapra, who read out some of the important extracts from a booklet written by Prof. Manoranjan Prasad, dealing with the life of the great revolutionary leader, Babu Kunwar Singh. After the meeting the group proceeded to the Elliot Tank where salt was manufactured. Two of the volunteers, who actively participated in the manufacture of salt were Ganesh Prasad and Badri Nariain, who were students of Chapra Zila School.<sup>87</sup>

In Maharajganj Police Station ten or fifteen volunteers started manufacturing salt and when the police came on the scene they shouted *Bande Mataram*.<sup>88</sup>

The Superintendent of Police, Saran, reported to the Deputy Inspector-General (C.I.D.), Patna on the 26th April 1930 that in Kateyan Police Station Dwarka Missir had taken part in manufacturing of salt.<sup>89</sup>

It is evident from the report of the Superintendent of Police, Saran dated 30th April 1930, that at Jalalpur in Barauli Police Station, salt was prepared on the 25th April 1930.<sup>90</sup>

Shri Rajendra Prasad along with Prof. Abdul Bari and Sarangdhar Sinha made an extensive tour of the district of Saran on April 25, 1930 and visited nearly every *satyagraha* camp of the district. Prof. Abdul Bari remarked after the termination of the tour, "Well, I am only surprised to see the work going on in the district. It appears as if the ocean of enthusiasm has burst forth here. It must be utilised to the fullest extent".<sup>91</sup>

At Manjhi (Saran) salt preparation was started on the 25th April 1930. The first instalment of contraband salt was prepared by burning foreign cloth in the oven.<sup>92</sup>

At Jigna in Bhorey Police Station salt preparation was started on the 26th April 1930, and Harinarain Lal and Ratan Dubey who were men of great local influence were arrested and each was sentenced to three months simple imprisonment and a fine of Rupees two hundred fifty only.<sup>93</sup>

The salt manufacturing was taken up at Garkha Police Station under the leadership of Pashupati Singh, who was arrested on the 27th April 1930 and sentenced to six months simple imprisonment. But his arrest infused a new life in the people of the locality. After his arrest the people of the *thana*, numbering two thousand offered felicitations to his family. The mother of Pashupati Singh was over-joyed to hear the news of the arrest of her son and showered flower and rice on the people. The salt *satyagraha* also thrilled the old men of 70 and 80 who volunteered to enrol themselves as Congress workers.<sup>94</sup>

Shri Rudra Narayan Sinha, a zamindar of Kumna (Saran) was arrested on the 29th April 1930, on account of his participation in salt *satyagraha*. He was sentenced to six months simple imprisonment".<sup>95</sup>

At Dewan Parsa in Mirganj Police Station the salt manufacturing was also started. According to the Superintendent of Police, Saran, "this was a bad village in the non-cooperation days".<sup>96</sup>

Salt preparation was also done in other places e.g. in Mirganj, Muphrera, while contraband salt was prepared at other centres as usual in the district.<sup>97</sup>

On the 3rd May 1930, Lakshmi Singh of Ekma was sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment under section-9 of the Salt Act. After his arrest the local Middle English School of Ekma was closed and all the students and teachers accompanied the procession when he was taken to Daudpur Railway Station. When the procession reached the Railway Station, the Headmaster, the teachers and all the students of Jaintpur High English School garlanded Lakshmi Singh.<sup>98</sup>

#### **Arrest of Mahatma Gandhi & its repercussions on Saran**

The Government of India was frightened by the spontaneous manifestation of the national upsurge of the Indian people. The salt *satyagraha* had aroused the national sentiment of the people throughout India. It appeared as if Mahatma's objective behind the salt *satyagraha* was going to be realised. Hence, on the 4th May 1930, the government decided to arrest Mahatma Gandhi who was the chief motivating force.

behind the entire movement. But to avoid any strong and immediate reaction, they wanted to suppress the news till 5th May 1930 and decided that "the utmost secrecy should be observed subject to taking all necessary precautions and that local government should at once get into communication with military authorities". On the 1st of May 1930, Mr. H.K. Briscoe, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa, sent from his camp at Ranchi instructions to the District Officers to be fully ready to cope with the repercussions of the event. They were informed that "hartal and noisy demonstrations may be expected on the publication of the news and as it is advisable to give demonstrators a chance of blowing off steam harmlessly, local officers on the occasion should not insist on the letter of the law regarding processions and meetings but should only interfere if the situation is likely to become dangerous". Further, Mr. W. Swain, Inspector-General of Police, Bihar & Orissa, was directed by the Chief Secretary on the same day "to issue instructions for such mobilisation and disposition of reserves" as he thought necessary "for a general Provincial emergency" utilising the approaching Bakrid festival as a "colourable excuse" for such steps. The police engaged on preventive duty in connection with salt manufacture could be called off for emergency work if necessary. To meet this situation the Inspector-General of Police allotted to Saran sixteen mounted Military Police and placed it at the disposal of the Superintendent of Police from the Provincial reserves.<sup>99</sup>

Finally, Mahatma Gandhi was arrested on May 4, 1930.<sup>100</sup> Consequently *hartals* were observed throughout the country. It was noted in a contemporary government report that Chapra was thrown into a state of mild excitement, and almost complete *hartal* was observed. Several processions were taken out, but as they were orderly the authorities decided to ignore them. Very few lawyers attended courts and members of the bar led some of the processions and all students of Chapra town with the exception of a few of the Zila School boys, struck!<sup>101</sup>

The arrest of Mahatma Gandhi aroused spontaneous protest throughout the length and breadth of the country. Some people took this incident as a matter of great national insult which

forced them to take extreme steps. The feelings of consternation that the arrest produced did not even leave the police force untouched. As a protest against the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi, the police constable, Sobhit Singh of Sonpur (Saran) resigned from his post.<sup>102</sup>

At Mairwa, two Chaukidars clothed in *khaddar* and loaded with garlands turned up before the Sub-Inspector of Police and said that they no longer desired to serve the Government and deposited their uniforms. But when the Sub-Inspector reasoned with them, one of them withdrew his resignation.<sup>103</sup>

Shri Rajendra Prasad, the President of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, issued a circular on the 9th May 1930, directing all subordinate committees to start picketing cloth and liquor shops from the 16th May. In pursuance of this instruction, picketing of foreign cloth shops started at Chapra town from the 21st May 1930. Before every cloth shop two or three volunteers were posted and customers were requested not to purchase foreign clothes.<sup>104</sup>

So far the *satyagrahis* were not subjected to any very harsh treatment by the government officials save and except in extreme cases. Some of them were sentenced to simple imprisonment under the relevant sections of the Salt Laws and the Indian Penal Code. But there occurred an incident of extreme cruelty when one of the *satyagrahis* became a martyr for the sake of his dear motherland. The fact of the incident stands like this. On 25th May 1930, Ramsundar Lal of village Achari Bankata, Police Station Bhorey, Saran was going to village Khurharia, Police Station Bhorey, to hold a public meeting.<sup>105</sup> Since he was a *Dulpati* of the Congress volunteers of that locality, at the instigation of somebody he was waylaid and mercilessly assaulted by some miscreants until he was half dead. These miscreants included some Pasis and chaukidars and who while assaulting cried all along *Sarkar Ki Jai*. The miscreants were not satisfied by simply assaulting him until he fell down unconscious but they buried the half-dead body in the burning sand of mid-day.<sup>106</sup> When the news of his assault reached his village-home, his near relatives turned up to the place of occurrence and dug out his dead body. The news c

his martyrdom created a furor throughout the province of Bihar and this issue was also raised in the Provincial Legislative Council by Shrinandan Prasad Narayan Singh Sharma of Saran, who put the following questions before the Treasury Bench :

*Questions*

- (a) Is it a fact that one Ram Sundar Lal, resident of village Achari-Bankata, Post Office and Police Station Bhorey, district Saran, was beaten to death by certain persons including some Pasis and Chaukidars who were crying "Sarkar Ki Jai ? "
- (b) Is it a fact that the said Ram Sundar Lal and his companions were unarmed and were attacked while walking peacefully on a public road ?
- (c) Is it a fact that Ram Sundar Lal and his party never retaliated to the blows of their assailants ?
- (d) Is it a fact that the half-dead body of Ram Sundar Lal was buried by the assailants in the burning sand at mid-day and was subsequently taken out by his friends ?
- (e) If the answer to clauses (a) to (d) be in the affirmative what steps have government taken to bring the offenders to book ? If no step has been taken, will government be pleased to state the reasons ?
- (f) Was any inquest held to ascertain the circumstances under which Ram Sundar Lal died ? If so, with what results ?"

*Answer*

Mr. M. G. Hallett, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa :

- (a) Ram Sundar Lal received an injury to his head in a scuffle with some Pasis whose trees he was attempting to damage. The local Indian doctor found only a slight swelling on his head and did



not think the injury to be serious. He, however, died on the same night about nine hours after the occurrence.

- (b) The answer is in the negative. Ram Sundar Lal and his companions were armed with *lathis* and two of the Pasis were also hurt.
- (c) The answer is in negative.
- (d) The answer is also in the negative. The body of Ram Sundar Lal was cremated by his father.
- (e) and (f) No report was lodged at the police station nor was any complaint made to the Magistrate. A full enquiry was, however, made by the Deputy Superintendent of Police who found that there was no definite or reliable information as to who caused injuries to Ram Sundar Lal and further that he was injured by persons who were exercising the right of private defence of property.

Babu Shrinandan Prasad Narayan Singh Sharma : With reference to answer (a) will government be pleased to let me know the names of those two Pasis ?

Mr. M. G. Hallett : No, Sir.

Babu Shrinandan Prasad Narayan Singh Sharma : With reference to answers (e) and (f), if there was no reliable information however government is in a position to know the names and other details ?

Mr. M. G. Hallett : Enquiries were made by the Deputy Superintendent of Police and the Inspector. The enquiries were made in spite of the fact that there was no report lodged at the thana and no report was lodged before the magistrate.

Babu Shrinandan Prasad Narayan Singh Sharma : Why did not government start a case ?

Mr. M. G. Hallett : The answer is given in answers (e) and (f).

**Babu Shrinandan Prasad Narayan Singh Sharma :** What I mean to say is that in the reply to question (a) it is stated that Ram Sundar Lal received an injury to his head in a scuffle with some Pasis whose trees he was attempting to damage : whereas in the reply to questions (e) and (f) it is stated that there was no definite or reliable information. Are these not contradictory statements ?

**The Hon'ble the President :** Order, order.

**Babu Shrinandan Prasad Narayan Singh Sharma :** What I mean to say, Sir, is: how is government going to reconcile these two conflicting statements ?

**Mr. M. G. Hallett :** They are quite consistent. There was no definite informations as to who were the persons who had caused the injuries, but there was the information that they had been caused by certain Pasis.<sup>107</sup>

As a matter of fact M.G. Hallett, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa, concealed the real facts. It is quite clear from the report of the Deputy Superintendent of Police, in-charge, Siwan-Gopalganj dated 30th June, 1930 that the riot occurred between Congress volunteers and Daulat Pasi and Sawal Chamar assisted by others.<sup>108</sup>

Intensive picketing of excise shops, toddy, liquor and Ganja was resorted to in the major part of the Saran district. On the 26th May 1930, at 10 p. m. the Superintendent of Police, Saran, received a wire from village Ekma that a constable who had gone to purchase Ganja had been surrounded by volunteers who refused to let him go until he relinquished the intoxicant. Therefore, the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police arrived at Ekma and found that the constable was standing by the side of the road and was closely surrounded by volunteers, some of them were lying on the feet of the constable. The police arrested thirty volunteers at that place and thus freed the constable.<sup>109</sup>

In Manjhi Police Station, the situation was quite tense. Thirty-two Chaukidars had already resigned by the period ending 31st May 1930. In Kateyan Police Station the village police and

the Thana staff were debarred from the [supplies of food-grains etc.<sup>110</sup>

At Chapra, picketing was started on liquor and Ganja shops on 29th May 1930. And within a few days sales of liquor decreased by 80% in one liquor shop and by 50% in another.<sup>111</sup>

It was reported to the government that on 31st May 1930 about three hundred volunteers invaded the Pratap Pur's factory compound and mutilated palm trees. The mob was led by Ramdeo Ahir.<sup>112</sup>

In Sonapur, the volunteers blocked the entrance to the Ganja shop by standing in front of it with joined hands. A case under section 143/186 I. P. C. was started against nine volunteers and they were arrested. The volunteers addressed a crowd at the Sonapur Railway Station and asked the audience to continue the picketing with redoubled energy.<sup>113</sup>

At Gopalganj, picketing of excise shops was started on 2nd June 1930, by a large number of volunteers.

Two important meetings were held in Saran district by the first week of June 1930. One at Siwan and another at village Jagarnatha in Mirganj Police Station. The usual subjects were dealt with.<sup>115</sup>

Shri Jhulan Singh of village Haiapore, Police Station Gopalganj, was arrested at Gopalganj in the midnight of 25th June 1930 while he was guarding the volunteers <sup>116</sup>

In the meantime Rajendra Prasad, President, Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, made extensive tours of Siwan and Gopalganj Sub-divisions and addressed a large number of meetings. The main theme of his speeches was the use of *khaddar* and the boycott of all the foreign goods with a view to creating unemployment in England. He also stressed on the picketing of foreign cloth shops, excise shops and withholding of Chaukidari tax.<sup>117</sup> He also addressed a meeting at Chapra on 1st July 1930.

The speeches of Rajendra Prasad were regarded as highly provocative from the point of view of maintaining peace and

order in the province. The provincial authorities finally decided to arrest Rajendra Prasad since his movement was causing great anxieties to the authorities concerned. Consequently, he was arrested on 5th July. The news of his arrest spread like wild fire in the Chapra town. As a result of this a big procession shouting anti-British slogans went round the town. Complete *hartal* was declared in the town. The shops were closed and the students left their schools. On the 7th July 1930, Rajendra Prasad was convicted for six months simple imprisonment.

It was reported to the government that at Hathwa on 2nd July 1930, volunteers went in a procession and picketed the liquor shops.<sup>119</sup>

On the 3rd July 1930, the Congress meetings were held at Mirganj, Mairwa, Bhokey, Siwan, Gopalganj, and the audience were asked to picket the excise shops and to stop payment of Chaukidari tax. Women were encouraged to come forward and join the Freedom Movement.<sup>120</sup>

On the 4th and 5th July 1930, meetings were held at Darauli, Baniapore,<sup>121</sup> and Chapra. In the Chapra meeting the chief speakers were Rambilash Sharma, Adya Sharan Pandey, Mahamaya Srasad Sinha and Prabhunath Singh.<sup>122</sup>

Shri Jaleshwar Prasad of village Raphipur, (under Sub-division Siwan) who was a prominent Congress leader of Saran district had been arrested in the last week of June 1930. He was charged under section 107 Cr. P. C. for which he was sentenced for six months simple imprisonment in default of furnishing a security for himself.<sup>123</sup>

Among other Congress workers arrested by 11th July 1930 were Chandrika Singh of Saran, Pandit Jiva Nand Sharma and Adya Sharan Pandey, President and Secretary respectively of Saran District Congress Committee, Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, Maulvi Sajjad and Pandit Dwarkanath Tiwary, members of the District Board, Saran.<sup>124</sup> The arrest and convictions of a number of prominent local volunteers led considerable resentment in the locality.<sup>125</sup>

On the 12th July 1930, at Semra, Police Station Kuchai-kote, a meeting of the supporters of the Congress was held. The most remarkable features of the meeting was that about one hundred women were present. In this meeting speeches were delivered dealing with the political situation of the country.<sup>126</sup>

On the 13th July 1930, a meeting was held at Mairwa, the chief speaker was Ramgulam Sahi. Boycott of government servants, foreign clothes and liquor was stressed.<sup>127</sup>

On the 15th July 1938, at Chainpur, Police Station Siwan, three volunteers were arrested under the Chaukidari Ordinance. The volunteers addressed the crowd of about four thousand and exhorted them to stop the payment of Chaukidari tax and boycott Chaukidars and members of *panchayat*, who refused to resign. While collections of the Chaukidari tax were going on at village Mura under Siwan Police Station, a band of volunteers arrived, and through their intervention the collection work was suspended.<sup>128</sup>

On the same day, Pandit Bedbrat addressed a meeting at Khodaibagh, police station Chapra and asked the audience to use the *khadi*, enlist themselves as volunteers and do picketing at the excise shops.<sup>129</sup>

On the 16th July 1930, a meeting was held at Chainpur, police station Siwan. This was a meeting attended by all sections of people. In the meeting headmen were appointed for each caste and they were directed to stop the payment of Chaukidari tax.<sup>130</sup> amongst their castemen.

On the 19th July 1930, some students assembled in Chapra town and they decided to picket schools. On the 20th July 1930, a meeting was held at Chainpur, Police Station Masarakh. Sahdeo Sharma, a local leader advocated for the stoppage of the payment of Chaukidari tax. Harihar Singh, another local leader, also spoke in this meeting. On the 21st July, a meeting was held at Pachrukhi, Police Station Siwan and the importance of the use of *khaddar* was stressed.<sup>131</sup>

On the 20th July 1930, the prize distribution of Rampur Middle English school was to be presided over by an English District Magistrate of Saran. When the *swarajist* came to know it, they went to the proprietor of the school and frankly told him that if the District Magistrate came, he would be received with black flags. The proprietor of the school thought it wise to postpone the function in order to avoid the unseemly scene.<sup>132</sup>

The volunteers of Kateyan Police Station adopted a new method of picketing. They lay in front of the foreign cloth shops with bricks on their chest and thus picketed the shops.<sup>133</sup>

A Chaukidar of Baniapore Police Station appeared at the *thana* as the head of a procession of *swarajists*, deposited his uniform and went off singing national songs.<sup>134</sup>

Villagers in Union IV of Manjhi Police Station refused to pay Chaukidari tax. The collecting *panchs* of Unions IV and V of Basantpore Police Station resigned from their posts. No collection was made there.<sup>135</sup>

All the villagers of Guthani Thana and the residents of twenty villages of Garkha Thana stopped payment of Chaukidari tax.<sup>136</sup>

It is evident from the report of the Superintendent of Police, Saran, that till 2nd August 1930, picketing of excise shops was continued throughout Saran district. In many places picketing was done even by small children in the month of August, 1930.<sup>137</sup>

When the police arrived at village Bareja, Police Station Manjhi to watch the political atmosphere of the village, the signal for the alarm was sounded and within a few minutes volunteers rushed up and commenced singing national songs and shouting British Raj Ki Chhai (Down with the British Raj), Chaukidari tax Band Ho (Stop Chaukidari tax), Naukar Shahi Barbad Ho (bureaucracy be crushed).<sup>138</sup>

In Manjhi, Garkha, Mairwa, Mirzapore (later on this Police Station transferred to Marhowrah and Siwan Thanas the propaganda against the Chaukidari tax was carried on in some places

openly and in others secretly. In Kateyan Police Station, a band of 9 picketeers shouted by beat of drum not to pay the Chaukidari tax.<sup>139</sup>

At Siwan, the cloth shops of two Marwaris were picketed, who had received a consignment of foreign cloth. In this connection seven picketers were arrested and two sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment and five others to three months.<sup>140</sup>

On the 23rd July 1930, at Makar, Police Station Parsa, a meeting was held and the village Chaukidars were asked to resign and it was proposed to picket the houses of those who were addicted to drinking till they gave up the habit. On the 27th July 1930, at Rashulpur, Police Station Mirzapore, and Dumari, Police Station Chapra Muffassil, meetings were held and village police were asked to resign. People were also asked to stop payment of Chaukidari tax and to boycott foreign cloth shops.<sup>141</sup>

On the 28th July 1930, at Siwan and Amnaur (under Police Station Mirzapore), meetings were held. At the first place, the boycott of all British goods and establishment of *Panchayats* were stressed. While at the second place which was a gathering of women only they were requested to become volunteers for picketing purposes and to use *khadi*.<sup>142</sup>

On the 25th July 1930, Mangal Brahmachari, resident of Police Station Baniapore, a local leader, was sentenced under section 143 I. P. C. to six months and again under section 4 of the Ordinance of 1930 to another six months by L. N. Sinha, Deputy Magistrate, 1st Class, Chapra in G. R. Case No. 615 of 1930, Trial No. 119.<sup>143</sup>

In August, 1930, Biresh Dutt Singh, pleader of Chapra, was elected as the President of the Saran District Congress Committee, in place of Jiwanand Sharma, who had been convicted, and Hiralal Marwari of Dighwara was elected as Secretary. Biresh Dutt Singh toured the whole district and spoke mainly on the boycott of British goods, the picketing of excise shops and weaving of *khadi*.<sup>144</sup>

On, the 4th August 1930, the collecting panchayat chief of Union No. IV of Basantpore police station went to village Sarari accompanied by three constables but he was chased away by the villagers.<sup>145</sup>

On the 10th August 1930, a big procession went round Chapra demonstrating the use of the Taklis. It ended in a meeting at the Town Hall where speeches were made advocating the spinning of *khadi* yarn and manufacture of *khaddar*.<sup>146</sup>

Meetings were held throughout the district and in all these meetings the boycott of British goods, establishment of village *panchayat*, stoppage of *chaukidari* tax, use of *khadi*, enlisting of volunteers were advocated. Such meeting were held on 3rd August, 1930 at Murarpati, police station Raghunathpore, on 8th August 1930 at Mairwa, police station Mairwa, and at Bahuara, police station Mirzapore, on 9th August 1930 at Pojhi, police station Mirzapore, on the 10th August at Chapra Silhauri, police station Mirzapore and Gangauli, police station Masarakh, on 11th August 1930 at Balua, police station Chapra, on 12th August at Done, police station Darauli, on 13th August at Chapra, Kopa, police station Chapra Muffassil and Guthani, on 14th August at Darauli, Manjhi and Droiganj, on 15th August at Amnaur, on 16th August at Gaura Bazar, Police Station Mirzapore, and Guthani on 17th August at Narenpur, police station Masarakh and Guthani. In all these meetings great enthusiasm prevailed amongst the audience.<sup>147</sup>

The Government tried to crush the national feelings of the people by instituting several false cases against the freedom fighters, e. g. on 18th August 1930 the police searched the house of Ganga Bishun Sonar of Makhdum Sarai, Siwan, and alleged that they found a bomb in is house. According to the police report, the owner of the house and some others were members of a revolutionary party and conspired to manufacture bombs with the object of throwing on police and government officers, who were found vindictive against the civil disobedience workers. Consequently on the 19th December 1930, the owners of the house, Ganga Bishun Sonar and Bhagwan Sonar, were arrested. But the owners denied any idea of the bomb. They argued that one of their enemies might have



placed the bomb in their house. They appealed against their arrest, in the court of the District Session Judge. On the 20th April 1931, Mr. R. B. Beever, I. C. S., the learned Session Judge of Saran, in Trial No. 13 of 1930, passed the following judgment :

“...Taking all these circumstances into consideration I am not satisfied that the prosecution has been able to establish beyond reasonable doubt that either of the accused had any knowledge of the presence of the explosives in their house.

Agreeing therefore with one of the Assessors and disagreeing with the other two I find both the accused not guilty of either of the charges framed against them and acquitted them.”<sup>148</sup>

This indicates the high sense of justice of an Englishman who differed with the majority of the assessors and acquitted the accused since he was convinced of their innocence.

Shri Nageshwar Prasad, pleader, Dharm Nath Sahay, pleader appeared on behalf of the accused while Rai Bahadur Bankim Chandra Mukherjee, Public Prosecutor appeared on behalf of the Crown.

On the 19th August 1930, a meeting was held at Sanhani, Police Station Basantpur, on 22nd August 1930, another meeting was held at Nagra, Police Station Chapra Muffassil and on the same day a caste meeting of *Nonias* was held at Rashidpur under Police Station Masarakh. In these meetings it was decided to re-start the manufacture of contraband salt after the rains. On the 23rd August 1930, *Swarajist* meetings were held at Rashulpur, Police Station Mirzapore, Chapra town, Chainpur, police station Siwan, on 25th August 1930 at Bajalpur, Police Station Sonepur, Langarpura Police Station Mairwa, on 26th August 1930 at Hajiapore, police station Gopalganj, on 27th August 1930 at Masarakh, police station Masarakh, Narindpur, Police Station Darauli, on 28th August 1930 at Baniapore, on 29th August 1930 at Siwan and on 30th August 1930 at Chapra. In all these meetings the non-payment of *chaukidari* tax, refusal to purchase attached property, boycott of foreign goods and liquor shops were advocated.<sup>149</sup>

The women of the district were also active in advancing the cause of the national movement. They also helped the movement by using Charkha etc. During the month of August, 1930 six thousand Charkhas and one hundred sixty three looms worked in the Mairwa thana alone, yarn worth Rs. 2,500 was purchased and 104 maunds of yarn were spun through the help of *charkhas* and *saklis*.<sup>150</sup>

By September 1930, as a result of agitation of the Congressmen the sale of liquor in the district of Saran diminished to a great extent. The liquor shops in Garkha thana were closed and in the next few months such shops were also closed at other places.<sup>151</sup>

To realise the Chaukidari tax, the police resorted to forced extortion in village Bareja of Saran district continuously for eight days in the middle of September, 1930. An additional police force of fifty armed constables with two Sub-Inspectors of Police were posted there to force the people to make the payment.<sup>152</sup> Armed policemen went to other villages and intimidated the people by confiscating their property and goods of all kinds including plough, cattle, corns, cooking utensils, grains etc. for non-payment of chaukidari tax. Assault became a common feature of official repression in different areas. The Congress office of Bhorey was burnt by the police. The women of the Bhorey *thana* were dragged out of their houses and their ornaments were seized from their persons.<sup>153</sup>

In Saran district by the end of 26th September 1930, seven hundred eighty two (782) persons were arrested and were put in jail.<sup>154</sup>

The Sub-Inspector of Baniapore police station reported to the Superintendent of Police, Saran, that the headmaster of the upper primary school at Senaur sent his students to picket excise shops at Dayalpur (Saran).<sup>155</sup>

During the *Dasahara* festival a very big *mela* was held at Hathuwa in 1930. A large number of volunteers assembled there, mostly from Bhorey, Kateyan, Mairwa police station in order to picket the liquor and Ganja shops. In the afternoon of 2nd October 1930, the Sub-Inspector of police, Mirganj,

arrested five picketers at the liquor shop and brought them to police station. The Sub-Inspector was soon surrounded by a large number of volunteers who brandished their *lathis* to make a show of force against the police. The Sub-Inspector fled away and the arrested picketers were released.<sup>156</sup>

On the same day (i. e. on 2nd October 1930), the police-in-charge of Manjha Mela (police station, Barauli) arrested a man who was picketing before a liquor shop. The police-in-charge was surrounded by a large number of volunteers from Bhorey police station and the arrested man was forcibly rescued from the possession of the police.<sup>157</sup>

At Sonapur *mela* the picketing of liquor and Ganja shops were started from the 4th November 1930. Volunteers went round the *mela* with flags. Pandit Girish Tiwary, Secretary, Saran District Congress Committee, was arrested on the same day.<sup>158</sup>

The police raided the Sonapur *swaraj ashram* and the *chulhas* (ovens) etc, broken. There was a liquor and Ganja shop at Dudhaila in Sonapur (about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from the mela). On the 5th November 1930, the volunteers who were picketing the liquor shop were badly beaten by Gurkha Sepoys. On seeing this a large crowd collected round the Gurkhas and started throwing of the brickbats. In the meantime, the Superintendent of Police arrived with a party of Gurkhas and brought the situation under control. At about 1 p. m. the volunteers assembled and passed through the Sonapur police station shouting slogans and went near the Dudhaila liquor shop. The mob was led by Janak Dulari, an active lady Congress worker of Chapra.<sup>159</sup>

On the 27th November 1930, the inhabitants of village Dumrahar under Siwan Sub-division, attacked the Assistant Superintendent of Police, who had gone there with the Sub-Divisional Officer, accompanied by four police constables and four mounted military policemen to the village to secure payment of the *chaukidari* tax. The Assistant Superintendent and two mounted men rode through the village warning the people that the tax should be paid at once. In the centre of the village they came across a crowd of men armed with *lathis* who defied

the Police and refused to disperse. The mob attacked the horsemen on all sides with their *lathis*. When the mob became violent the Assistant Superintendent of Police fired two shots with his revolver, then the mob took cover under the house but they continued to pelt the police with clods of earth. When reinforcements arrived, the crowd dispersed but a number of arrests were made and the police left the village after all the taxes had been realised.<sup>160</sup>

On the 2nd December 1930, an Assistant Superintendent of Police with some mounted policemen visited village Barhulia under Darauli police station to assist in the collection of the *chaukidari* tax. A mob armed with *lathis*, spears and *garasa* collected and attacked the police. They were dispersed by the police but they reassembled and attacked the policemen again from several directions. Thus the police had to open fire in order to save themselves. Nine shots in all were fired and then the mob dispersed. One Ganga Prasad Rai was hit by a bullet who subsequently died in Siwan hospital in the same night. Several persons received serious injuries. Some of the policemen and their horses were also injured.<sup>161</sup>

The Government of Bihar felt alarmed at the violent attitude of the people of Darauli police station. On the 4th December 1930, District Officer of Saran received the following instruction from the government :

“In view of the two attacks on military police in Darauli and in accordance with standing orders a Magistrate should always accompany Military Mounted Police when visiting villages.”<sup>162</sup>

On the 16th December 1930, ‘there was a Congress meeting near Bhorey Dak Bungalow in the mango orchard. A large number of people were present there. The audience were asked to stop the payment of *chaukidari* tax and picket liquor and foreign cloth shops. In the meantime the Sub-Inspector of Police, Bhorey, arrived and arrested twenty one persons but when the arrested men were sent towards the police station, the rest of the persons became violent and began to throw brickbats and attacked the police force. By this time the mob

had increased to about four to five thousand in number. To disperse the mob the police fired 28 shots. But the firing had a very little effect and the mob continued to press the police to retire. The Sub-Inspector took his shelter in Bhorey Doctor's quarter. Then the mob attacked the police station in search of the Sub-Inspector of Police. In the meantime the Deputy Superintendent of Police arrived with force. Thus the life of the Sub-Inspector was saved.<sup>163</sup>

As a result of this firing by the police, three persons died in Chapra hospital others were seriously injured.<sup>164</sup>

In connection with the said Bhorey incident one Sukhdeo Tiwary was sentenced to undergo two years rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs, 50/- in default thereof to serve another three months term by the Sub-Divisional Officer, Gopalganj on the 24th January 1931.<sup>165</sup>

The total number of arrests and convictions that were made in Bihar on account of the Civil Disobedience Movement from the 15th to 18th December 1930 were 166, out of it 84 belonged to Saran district alone.<sup>166</sup>

On 23rd December 1930, a mass meeting of the leading men and the oppressed poor cultivators of about seventy to eighty villages of police stations Guthani, Mairwa, Darauli, Kateyan, Bhorey etc. of Saran district and also of the peasants of several villages in Deoria Tahsil (U.P.) was held at Baikunthpur in Gorakhpur district (U.P.) under the presidentship of Swami Sachchidanandji Paribrajak. In this meeting the political situation was discussed and a number of volunteers were recruited.<sup>167</sup>

Again on the 27th December 1930, a joint meeting of the peasants of 25 to 30 villages of Gorakhpur district (U.P.) and Saran district was held at Darzia Bazar (Gorakhpur district, U.P.) under the presidentship Guch Chaudhary. An extract of the resolution passed in the meeting is given below :

"This meeting brings to the notice of the Government of India as well as the Government of Bihar and also the high officials of the Government that in the district of Saran specially within the jurisdiction of Kateyan, Bhorey, Darauli

police stations the condemnable behaviour of the civil and military police towards the Congress workers and the public—such as incendiarism, looting of food stuff and other goods, spitting on foods, tying a man to the neck or hind legs of a horse and forcing him to run along with the horse for miles together and to clean the nightsoils and horse dung, assaulting children and women, insulting them, seizing goats and sheep forcibly and eating them and putting openly on fire the national flag having spitted on it, cleaning shoes with that flag, dusting the legs of the horse with the same and other serious oppressions which are often seen and heard and the sight and hearing of which are regarded as condemnable and which have aroused indignation amongst the people. This meeting resents and strongly warrants the Government and its high officials that such things should not happen in future. Enquiries be also made into the actions of those who acted in such beastly way and they may be punished accordingly.

“This meeting further sympathises with the brethren of Kateyan and Bhokey police stations and advises them that nobody should leave his house and run away and that they should immediately send information of any oppression or loot and the quantity and the value of property looted by the *chaukidari* tax collectors or any body else to the President, Deoria-Sub-division, Kisan Association (Head Office Vijay Ashram, Raghunathpur, S.O. Tarkulwa, Gorakhpur U.P.) so that the Kisan Association might be able to take legal steps on the basis of those informations...”<sup>168</sup>

The total figures of the arrested persons in the whole of Bihar Province since the very beginning of the Civil Disobedience Movement rose to 12,194 up to the end of 1930 out of this Saran alone contributed 1286.<sup>169</sup>

Shri Jamuna Singh, President of Saran Union Board had resigned from the presidentship in obedience to the call of Mahatma Gandhi.<sup>170</sup>

Shri Rajbanshi Singh of Saran who had joined the National Movement was put in jail in 1930 and was sentenced to six months.<sup>171</sup>

Shri Phulandeo Giri son of Shri Ramjanam Giri of village Betwania, police station Ekma (Saran) was imprisoned in 1930 in connection with Civil Disobedience Movement along with about other twenty persons of the locality.<sup>172</sup>

In the year 1930, Mahamaya Prasad Sinha was the Dictator of the Saran district to lead the Civil Disobedience Movement. He was imprisoned for it for a year.<sup>173</sup>

The Government of Bihar in a communique announced that they have decided to post a force of 50 additional police in certain villages within the Darauli police station in Saran district for a period of one year (i.e. the whole of 1931) to maintain order in the locality and their expenses were to be borne by the villagers of Darauli police station.<sup>174</sup> The said act of the government was condemned by the Editor of the *Searchlight* in its issue dated 8th January, 1931.

Special military force consisting of nearly 600 Gurkha soldiers and 30 mounted policemen was posted at Maharajganj (Saran) to collect the chaukidari tax. They closed the *Ashram* at Maharajganj and removed the National Flags which were flying on private houses. The militarymen paraded the streets of Maharajganj and neighbouring villages to create a feeling of terror amongst the masses. However, the people were determined not to pay the taxes.<sup>175</sup>

On the 6th January, 1931, Bachan Ojha of village Hosepur, police station Ekma (Saran) was found selling a pamphlet named *Bhaartiya Sankhnad* at Chapra, exhorting the public not to pay the chaukidari tax. The said pamphlet was already forfeited by the Government of Bihar and Orissa by a letter (vide Political Department no. 6796/C) dated 6th October 1930. Bachan Ojha was charged under section 17 (i) Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908. He was convicted and sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment on the 14th February 1931.<sup>176</sup>

On the 26th January 1931, the 'Independence Day' was celebrated throughout the Saran district with great fervour, the most notable being the celebration at Goreakothi. A big procession consisting of about 3000 people singing national songs

with flags in hands started from the garden in front of the house of Narain Prasad Sinha. But when the procession reached near the Goreakothi High School the situation became very tense. Consequently an altercation took place between the mob and the police.<sup>177</sup> In this connection the Commissioner, Tirhut Division, Muzaffarpur sent a letter to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar & Orissa in his letter (D. No. 93/C) dated the 28th January, 1931, stating that the crowd rescued the arrested leaders and beat the police force consisting of constables and chaukidars. The Sub-Inspector escaped on a pony but his revolver was seized by the mob. The Sub-Divisional Officer, Siwan, and the Deputy Superintendent of Police, Siwan, proceeded to the spot with a party of Gurkha police. They arrested several persons and thus brought the situation under control. The Commissioner of Tirhut Division also mentioned in the said letter that the students of the Goreakothi High School took a prominent part in this mob frenzy and that the Headmaster was also defiant since he did not lend accommodation to the Gurkhas in the school when requested.<sup>178</sup>

When the whole of Saran district was plunged in the Civil Disobedience Movement at the call of the national leaders throughout 1930 and the early months of 1931 political situation was taking a different turn at Delhi. Mahatma Gandhi met Lord Irwin and after parleying for a few days an agreement was signed between them known as 'Delhi Pact' on the 5th March 1931. According to this agreement the Civil Disobedience Movement was to be "effectively discontinued" and certain reciprocal steps were to be taken by the Government of India and the Provincial Government, including the declaration of amnesty for persons convicted in connection with the Civil Disobedience, withdrawal of ordinances, restoration of confiscated, forfeited or attached properties except in certain circumstances, and administrative concessions to make salt in certain area. As regards constitutional questions there was to be scope for further discussion of the scheme outlined at the Round Table Conference.<sup>179</sup>

The 45th Session of the Indian National Congress met at Karachi in the last week of March 1931, with Sardar



Vallabhbhai Patel as its President. This Session passed a condolence resolution on the death of Pandit Motilal Nehru, Maulana Muhammad Ali, Maulana Mazharul Haque of Saran, Shah Muhammad Zubair, and the execution of Bhagat Singh and his comrades. This Congress passed the following resolution on Gandhi-Irwin Agreement :

“The Congress having considered the provisional settlement between the Working Committee and the Government of India, endorses it, and desires to make it clear that the Congress goal of *purna swaraj* remains intact....” This Session further passed the resolution on peaceful picketing that “this Congress notes with gratification the great success that has so far attended the boycott of foreign cloth and the sales of intoxicating drugs and drinks, and call upon the Congress organisation not to relax their efforts in the matter of peaceful picketing, provided that the picketing shall be in strict accord with the terms of the settlement in this behalf between the Government and the Congress.<sup>180</sup>

The district of Saran had sent the following delegates to Karachi Session of the Indian National Congress :

1. Mahamaya Prasad Sinha of Patheri, police station Maharajganj.
2. Rudra Narain Sinha of Ekma, police station Ekma.
3. Narayan Prasad of Chapra town.
4. Pandit Indra Raman Shastri.
5. Vishwanath Mishra, pleader.
6. Mahendra Prasad (brother of Rajendra Prasad).
7. Guhi Babu.
8. Pandit Bharat Mishra.
9. Nirkhan Ojha, Mukhtar.
10. Madho Singh, pleader.
11. Harnarayan Mehta, Mukhtar.
12. Janak Kishori Devi.
13. Jogendra Lal, pleader.
14. Bahuriaji.
15. Adya Sharan Pandey.
16. Jaleshwar Prasad, pleader.
17. Awadh Nandan alias Madrasiji.

18. Uma Datta Sharma of Ekma police station.
19. Kishun Bania of Maharajganj.
20. Ram Udar Das of Ekma.
21. Ram Naresh Singh of Atarasan, Ekma.
22. Chandrika Singh of Goreakothi.
23. Jamuna Singh of Sonepur.
24. Ram Kripal Lal of Sonepur.
25. Narain Prasad Singh of Goreakothi.
26. Ramdeni Singh of Barauli.
27. Janki Sharan Sahi of Chapra.
28. Biresh Dutta Singh of Goreakothi.
29. Mahendra Singh of Gopalganj.
30. Jhulan Singh of Gopalganj.
31. Mohan Das (Khaki Baba) of Gopalganj.
32. Dwarkanath Tiwary.
33. Mukha Ram of Mairwa.<sup>181</sup>

Chapra celebrated the 'National Week' from 6th April 1931 and passed the condolence resolution on the death of Bhagat Singh, Ganesh Shankar, Jitendra Nath, Mahmud Ali, Motilal Nehru and other unknown patriots of Jallianwalabagh incident.<sup>182</sup>

It is evident from the police report that Sawaliaji of Bareja Police station, Manjhi, exhorted the people not to lodge any information at the police station but lodge the same with *swaraj ashram*.<sup>183</sup>

The terms of the Delhi Agreement were not strictly observed by the Bihar Government. Commenting on the actions of Bihar Government, the *Searchlight* observed in its issue dated 8th April 1931, that the Bihar Government "continue to move on their own axis in the age-old manner oblivious of the rapid march of events. As many as 74 prisoners continue to enjoy hospitality of the Government in the Patna Camp Jail made up as follows : Monghyr-26, Chapra-21, Hazaribagh-16, Arrah-16, Champaran-1, Balasore-2, Patna-1, Dumka-1. There are a fair number in district jails also, and in addition to it in almost every district properties attached or confiscated remain in the possession of the government though applications after applications have been made for their return. Punitive police too

continued to be posted thereby providing a recurring cause for annoyance, though they had the sense to stop collection of costs. It is absurd to suggest that a whole month is not long enough for the very efficient agents of the Government to get through the scheme examined..."

The Delhi Settlement seemed to have broken down since for weeks there were charges and counter charges on both sides (the Government and the Congress). Mahatma Gandhi started for London on the 29th August to attend the Round Table Conference. Immediately after his return to India on 28th December 1931, Mahatma Gandhi was apprised of the tense political situation. Regarding the main problems of constitutional progress of India the Round Table Conference did not make any further progress.<sup>184</sup>

The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa in his letter (no. 6/27-C) dated 2nd January 1932, directed all the District Officers as follows :

"The Congress will revive Civil Disobedience, vigorous boycott of the British goods and British concerns and liquor shops and also disobedience of the so called "unmoral laws". It is probable that in view of this decision of the Congress, the Government of India will immediately promulgate the provisions of the ordinance which will be similar to Ordinance V of 1930, but with a wider definition of picketing, the unlawful Association Ordinance and the unlawful Institution Ordinance. The Emergency Power Ordinance will also be promulgated but will only at first be brought into force in those provinces where conditions are considerably worse than in Bihar, if however, the other Ordinances and the ordinary law are insufficient to control the situation in Bihar, the local Government will immediately move the Government of India to extend the ordinance also to this Province but it will be necessary for them to give reasons for its extension".<sup>185</sup>

On the 4th January 1932, referring to the above letter the District Magistrate of Saran wrote to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar & Orissa in his letter (D.O.No. 11/C) : "It appears that the Congress has definitely decided to revive

the Civil Disobedience Movement and I am, therefore, writing to enquire as to whether we are free to take action against Dr. Syed Mahmood and Babu Rajendra Prasad without taking orders from Government. There were instructions to that effect during the last Civil Disobedience Movement. These two gentlemen are likely to return to Chapra from Bombay within a few days and as they are strong supporters of the Civil Disobedience Movement, it will be necessary to take action against them".<sup>186</sup>

In the meantime on the 4th January 1932, the Government of Bihar notified : ".....Congress Committees or Sevadal or Youth League or Volunteers are continuing without distinctive title to be unlawful association....."<sup>187</sup>

Referring to the letter (D.O.No. 11/C) dated the 4th January 1932 of the District Magistrate, Saran, the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar & Orissa in his letter (D.O. No. 255/C) dated the 5th January 1932 informed the former :

"Babu Rajendra Prasad was arrested yesterday at the Sadaqat Ashram so he will not trouble you. There is no objection to proceed against Syed Mahmood without reference to Government, if he does anything which brings him under the Criminal Law Amendment Act and the Notification issued by this Government (No. 78/C dated 4th January 1932) which was communicated to you by my telegram yesterday..."<sup>188</sup>

On the 26th January 1932, the 'Independence Day' was celebrated in the district of Saran with great enthusiasm. While the Congress volunteers were going to celebrate the 'Independence Day' at Pojli Bazar, police station Parsa, they were stopped by the Sub-Inspector of Police, Sarsa in the way. But the volunteers did not heed to the police order. Consequently, the Sub-Inspector arrested some Congress workers. On this action of the police a large number of persons assembled and raided the police station of Parsa with the intention of rescuing the arrested persons.<sup>189</sup> The Sub-Inspector of Police, Parsa, lodged a case u/s 147/152/353/379 I.P.C. on the same day. On the 14th March 1932, all the accused persons were convicted.

and sentenced to the following terms of imprisonment and fines noted against each :

- |                        |                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Sahdeo Singh        | ...4 months R. I. and fine of Rs. 50/-                                                                           |
| 2. Dineshwar Mahto     | 2 months R. I. u/s 147 I. P. C.                                                                                  |
| 3. Kamla Mahto         | and fine of Rs. 50/-                                                                                             |
| 4. Jailal Mahto        | 2 months R. I. u/s 157 I.P.C. and 1 month u/s 379 I.P.C. and fine of Rs. 50/- The sentences to run concurrently. |
| 5. Jagat Prabhat       | ...2 months R. I. u/s 147 I.P.C.                                                                                 |
| 6. Magani Tiwary       | and fine of Rs. 50/-                                                                                             |
| 7. Ram Ekbal Choubey   |                                                                                                                  |
| 8. Jasoda Singh        |                                                                                                                  |
| 9. Indradeo Kuar       | fine of Rs. 75/-                                                                                                 |
| 10. Kaula Pat Thakur   | „                                                                                                                |
| 11. Chuchu Thakur      | „                                                                                                                |
| 12. Harihar Rai        | „                                                                                                                |
| 13. Ratan Koeri        | „                                                                                                                |
| 14. Baleshwar Gir      | „                                                                                                                |
| 15. Lakhichand Harijan |                                                                                                                  |
| 16. Radha Mohan Lal    | ...Fine of Rs. 50/- u/s 147 I.P.C.                                                                               |
| or Radha Kishun Lal    |                                                                                                                  |
| 17. Ram Sarup Upadhyay | „                                                                                                                |
| 18. Jadunandan Lal     | „                                                                                                                |
| 19. Lal Bihari Rai     | „                                                                                                                |
| 20. Jamuna Kuar        | „                                                                                                                |
| 21. Jagdeep Kuar       | „                                                                                                                |
| 22. Raja Kuar          | „                                                                                                                |
| 23. Prit Harijan       | „                                                                                                                |
| 24. Raghuni Teli       | „                                                                                                                |
| 25. Padarath Teli      | „                                                                                                                |
| 26. Ram Nath Sunri     | „                                                                                                                |
| 27. Sheonath Sunri     | „                                                                                                                |
| 28. Kanhai Sah         | „                                                                                                                |
| 30. Deonath Thakur     | „                                                                                                                |
| 31. Paras Kuer         | „                                                                                                                |
| 29. Kishun Sah         | „                                                                                                                |

32. Bari Ram Kelawar	...Fine of Rs. 50/-u/s 147 I.P.C
33. Ramavtar Kelawar	"
34. Lalchand Sonar	"
35. Lochan Teli	"
36. Sakal Pandey	"
37. Kamdeo Sukul. <sup>190</sup>	"

It is evident from the confidential report of the Commissioner of Tirhut Division, Muzaffarpur (memo no. 57/58/C) dated the 30th January 1932, which was forwarded to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa that in Saran "the main centres of possible trouble here are Gopalganj, Bhorey, Mirganj and Barauli..."<sup>191</sup>

On the 1st March 1932, Dinkar Dutta Chaubey, son of Tara Datta Chaubey of village Baijnathpur, Police Station Mirzapore, district Saran was arrested at Chapra Kuchery Railway Station who was in possession of about 50 copies of a printed pamphlet entitled *Swadhin Bhara Ki Jai*, which he was selling to the public on the railway station.<sup>192</sup> The District Magistrate, Saran, requested the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar & Orissa in his letter (no. 318/C) dated the 9th March 1932, to pass an order for the prosecution of Dinkar Dutta Chaubey.<sup>193</sup> Thus the Bihar Government prosecuted Dinkar Dutta Chaubey under section 153 A of the Indian Penal Code.<sup>194</sup>

On the 3rd March 1932 the District Magistrate of Saran passed the order under section 4 (i) of the Emergency Powers Ordinance, 1932, against 14 persons of Saran district. A statement enlisting brief charges against each of them is given below :

<i>Name and address</i>	<i>Brief history</i>
<b>Sadar Sub-division</b>	
1. Surendra Prasad Tiwary alias Babanji s/o Munshi Tiwary of Bareja, Police Station Manjhi.	(1 to 4) These men worked in the movement last year also although not convicted.

2. Ram Sundar Halwai s/o Ram Sarup Halwai of Bareja, police station Manjhi. They accommodate, and feed Congress volunteers and harbour them in their houses.
3. Sakhichand Sonar s/o Jagdeo Sonar of Bareja, police station Manjhi.
4. Harendra Prasad Tiwary s/o Lotan Prasad Tiwary of Bareja, police station Manjhi.
5. Jagarnath Mahto s/o Budhu Mahto of Ariaon. (5 to 8) These men also worked last year and year before last. Sahdeo Singh was sentenced to 2 months R.I. u/s 3 of Ordinance VI of 1930 on 13.9.30. These men visited Bareja and requested people to work for Congress.
6. Sahdeo Singh s/o Parwal Singh of Pillni.
7. Indrajit Singh s/o Chandrama Singh of Tajpore.
8. Dharichan Singh s/o Bhrignath Singh of Laguni. All of police station Manjhi.

#### Siwan Sub-division

9. Kishun Bama s/o Gobind Prasad Agrawal of Siwan Town. He was Congress Secretary. He also used to collect subscription for the maintenance of volunteers. He secretly did Congress work.
10. Doma Singh s/o Lachmi Narain Singh of Siahuta, police station Maharajganj. He secretly incited people to take out Jhanda (flag) on 26.1.32 when the 'Independence Day' was observed. He was suspected to have secretly organised Congress propaganda.
11. Sheodhari Singh s/o Chettaroo Singh of Sisain, police station Basantpur. He took leading part last year in inciting people to stop payment of chaukidari tax and brought much

pressure on chaukidars to resign. On the 'Independence Day' (26.1.32) he organised people to take out flags.

- |                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>12. Parmanand Singh s/o Chaturi Singh of Goreakothi, police station Basantpore.</p> | <p>He organised Salt Satyagraha last year and used to move village to village to propagate the doctrine of Civil Disobedience Movement. He helped to organise the procession of 'Independence Day' last year which led to serious riot. He harboured Chandrika Singh of Chainpur, police station, Basantpur an absconder of case u/s 17 (i) Criminal Law Act and the latter was arrested in his room.</p> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

#### **Gopalganj Sub-division**

- |                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>13. Jaleshwar Singh s/o Bishundeo Singh of Hajia-pore, police station Gopalganj.</p> | <p>He was an important leader during last year's Movement. Secretly organised procession on the 'Independence Day'.</p>                                                           |
| <p>14. Panchanand Tiwary s/o Ram Sarup of Chakia police station, Bholey.</p>            | <p>Returned from jail on 6.2. 1932 after undergoing sentence in Hussepur Lorry riot case and secretly visited several villages in furtherance of Congress work.<sup>186</sup></p> |

The District Magistrate of Saran passed an order on the 2nd May 1932, under section 4 (i) of the Emergency Powers Ordinance, 1932 against Ram Binod Singh s/o Jaikishun Singh of Malkhachak, Police Station Dighwara and ordered :



"(1) to reside within limits of your village Malkhachak.

(2) to refrain from taking further part in the activities of the Revolutionary Movement.

"This order will remain in force for one month from the date of issue."<sup>196</sup>

Again on the 30th May 1932, the Government of Bihar and Orissa extended the said order till the 4th July, 1932<sup>197</sup>

The Government of Bihar and Orissa seized the following Congress Ashramas of Saran district in 1932 under the unlawful ordinance and sealed them :

1. Gandhi Kutir belonging to Ram Binod Singh (Dighwara).
2. A *pucca* building at Sonapur.
3. A building belonging to Samalia Behari Verma, Ikma.
4. A thatched hut in village Dhobwal, police station Baniapore.
5. A thatched hut used by the Siwan-Divisional Congress Committee.
6. A hut used by the Mairwa Thana Congress Committee.
7. Two *pucca* houses in village Garhar used by the Thana Congress Committee.
8. A thatched hut used by the Congress volunteers in Manerghat Police Station Bholey.
9. Hajiapore Ashram (Gopalganj).<sup>198</sup>

On the occasion of the 'Independence Day' on the 26th January 1933, the wife and sister of Rajendra Prasad were arrested at Patna. But they were not prosecuted.<sup>199</sup>

It is evident from the Express letter (No. 149/C) of the District Officer of Saran dated the 20th March 1933 which was sent to the Government of Bihar that 64 persons were arrested in Saran district from October, 1932 to March, 1933 :

October, 1932	—	1
November, 1932	—	28
December, 1932	—	8
January, 1933	—	12
February, 1933	—	15
March, 1933	—	nil
Total :		<hr/> 64 <hr/>

Out of these 64, case was withdrawn against one, apology accepted in one case, one was acquitted and the remaining 61 were convicted.<sup>200</sup>

On the 17th December 1933, Sheobachan Singh, son of Lachmi Singh of Sonapur, who was a political suspect, assaulted one Ali Muhammad, detective constable, at Sonapur railway platform, whose duty was to watch the political suspects in train. Consequently, Sheobachan Singh, was convicted and sentenced to 18 months R.I. u/s 325 I.P.C. by S.K. Kaviraj, Sub-Divisional Officer, Sadar, Chapra on the 6th April 1934.<sup>201</sup>

The year 1934 started with an unprecedented calamity for Bihar. On the 15th January 1934, earthquake occurred in the afternoon. It devastated an area of 30,000 square miles, destroyed thousands of human lives, caused terrific damages to lands and buildings, railways and telegraph lines etc. Rajendra Prasad was then in Patna Hospital under police custody. He was released on the 17th January 1934. On the 19th January, he issued an appeal to the countrymen suggesting the formation of non-official agencies for organising relief in the affected areas. A non-official committee, called the Bihar Central Relief Committee was formed with Rajendra Prasad as President. Mahatma Gandhi had received information about the catastrophe through government communiques and reports in the newspapers and from a telegram of Rajendra Prasad, dated the 21st January 1934. Mahatma Gandhi reached Patna in the evening of the 11th March 1934. After moving from place to place in the affected areas and comforting the distressed people, Mahatma Gandhi accompanied by Rajendra Prasad, Mathura Prasad, Miss Loster, Mira Behn, Miss Agatha Harrison, Prabhawati Devi (wife of Jai Prakash Narain), Bhagwati Devi (sister of Rajendra Prasad), Kishun Devi, Peyarelal, Prithvi Raj and Deva Raj (his Secretaries) went to Chapra and addressed there a mammoth meeting of more than 30,000 people on the 27th March 1934.<sup>202</sup> He spoke "...But while I believe that God's ways cannot be comprehended fully by man, I have firm faith that not a leaf falls without His will,...If we had enough humility, we would have

no hesitation in accepting the recent earthquake as 'a just retribution for our sins...Today, more than ever, our hearts need a thorough cleansing and I would go so far as to say that even the earthquake would not be too great a price to pay, if it enabled India to cast off the canker of untouchability.'<sup>03</sup>

From Chapra Mahatma Gandhi went to Muzaffarpur by train in the afternoon of the 28th March 1934. There was tremendous rush of the people at every station. From the doorway of his compartment he spoke to a vast crowd on the platform of the Sonapur railway station :

"I know what this part of Bihar has gone through. The sufferings of the people have drawn the attention and sympathy of the whole world. In spite of liberal response to the Viceregal appeal and that of Babu Rajendra Prasad, it will be impossible to make good the tremendous losses suffered by north Bihar. But even if they were made good, it would be a very poor result of nature's recent terrible warning, if nothing more substantial were to come out of it. The donors of the two funds and the numerous other societies have perhaps satisfied their conscience by sending in their donations. Will the recipients be satisfied by merely receiving their share of the timely gift? What is your reaction to the divine wrath? If you and I do not learn the moral lesson which the calamity teaches us, then that neglect will be worse than the calamity itself..."<sup>204</sup>

The shock of the great earthquake of Bihar was felt in the district of Saran also but its havoc was not as great as in other parts of Bihar. Many mud-built houses either collapsed or were partially damaged. It is reported that 100 persons in Sarsa and 50 persons in Garkha *thanas* lost their lives due to collapse of the houses. A large number of wells collapsed and got silted and river beds became covered with sand thrown up through the cracks in the earth.<sup>205</sup>

Mahatma Gandhi's visit to Bihar in 1934 was significant not only from the humanitarian point of view and social reforms but also from the political point of view. The Working Committee of the Congress had its sitting at Patna from the 18th to

20th May 1934. It made recommendations with regard to the suspension of civil resistance and the adoption of the Council-entry programme which were accepted by the All India Congress Committee. The Working Committee, in view of the decision of the All India Congress Committee, suspended civil resistance, called upon all the Congressmen all over the country obey this direction and the Civil Resistance Movement was suspended on the 20th May 1934.<sup>206</sup> Thus ended the Civil Disobedience Movement, the third and the last to be led by Mahatma Gandhi in person.<sup>207</sup>

### **Formation of the Congress-Socialist Party, May 1934**

The month of May 1934, also saw the birth of the Socialist Party in India. It held its first All India Conference at Patna on the 17th May 1934, under the presidentship of Acharya Narendra Deva, and branched off as a separate party known as the Congress-Socialist Party within the fold of Congress.<sup>208</sup> Jai Prakash Narain was elected as the Organising Secretary whose duty was to go round and organise provincial groups where there was not and then place the whole thing before the general body for the formation of an All India Congress-Socialist Party at the time of the next session of the Indian National Congress.<sup>209</sup>

In the meantime the British Government lifted the ban on Congress and the Government of Bihar & Orissa issued a Notification on the 9th June, 1934 (No.3017/C) cancelling their Notification (No.78/C) dated the 4th January 1932, which had declared : "associations and combinations formed in pursuance of Civil Disobedience to be unlawful association".<sup>210</sup> On the same day the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar & Orissa (D O.No. 3020/41) directed all the District Officers that "....the local government have also decided to release the Congress Ashramas which are still in possession of government....Ashramas and other buildings in your district, which have not already been relinquished, should now be handed over to their owners..."<sup>211</sup>

Thus the Congress Ashramas of the Saran district which were under the possession of the government, were returned to their respective owners.

### Revolutionary Nationalism in Saran District

Revolutionary nationalism, described by some as 'terrorism', with its faith in methods of violence for securing freedom, which had its recrudescence in the post-Non-cooperation years, was increasingly active during the period under review as government repression became more and more ruthless. Inspired youth, with the fire of nationalism burning in their hearts and regardless of the horrors of torture and imprisonment or even of life, devised secret means for the liberation of the motherland.<sup>212</sup>

In Bihar too, as in Punjab and U.P., there were youthful nationalists, fired with revolutionary zeal for securing freedom of the country, following exactly similar methods as were applied by their comrades in other parts, such as use of pistols and country-made bombs to kill or intimidate persons whom they considered to be enemies of their country, seizure of wealth, mostly from government stock and formation of youth organisations for physical culture and other allied activities. Many of them were from 1930 members of 'Hindustan Socialist Republic Association or Army'. In fact, the revolutionary activities were inter-provincial in scope and extent. A branch of 'Hindustan Socialist Republic Army' was working secretly with Chapra as one of their centres.<sup>213</sup>

In 1931, some of the revolutionists, according to a government report, attacked a *math* at Phulwaria in the district of Saran, and the leg of one of the inmates was blown off by a bomb. For this act ten men stood trial on charge of conspiracy.<sup>214</sup>

Thus Saran played an important part in the Salt *Satyagraha* and in the Civil Disobedience Movement which was started by Mahatma Gandhi early in 1930 and continued up to 1934. It is rather significant that all sections of the people of the district of Saran were inspired by national feelings and they warmly responded to the clarion call of the Mahatma. Virtually every day there were public meetings, boycott of foreign cloths and picketing at the liquor shops by the volunteers either in Chapra town or Sub-divisional towns or in some thanas and villages.

Right from 1930 down to 1934, one remarkable factor of this movement was this that the women of Saran district also equally participated in the strikes and the boycotts that were organised by the district and the local leaders. Another significant fact is this that on the whole the people of Saran faced the situation calmly and boldly and remained non-violent in face of gravest provocation. They became violent in exceptional circumstances when the government officers and the policemen resorted to extreme repression. The district of Saran, the birth place of Braj Kishore Prasad, Rajendra Prasad and Jai Prakash Narayan, thus contributed its mite in the fight for India's Independence.

### Notes

1. *The Civil Disobedience Movement*, printed by the Manager, Government of India Press New Delhi, 1936, p. 1.
2. *The Searchlight*, January 20, 1930.
3. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. II, p. 49.
4. *The Searchlight*, January 29, 1930.
5. *Ibid.*, January 31, 1930.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, January 29, 1930.
9. *Ibid.*, February 7, 1930.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *The Searchlight*, January 29, 1930.
12. Prasad, Rajendra, *Mahatma Gandhi and Bihar*, p. 83.
13. Appendix—III.
14. File No. 91 of 1930, Bihar Political (Special) Department, Patna.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. *The Searchlight*, February 14, 1930.

18. File No. 100/1930, extract from D.I.G's (C.I.D.) fortnightly report for the first half of March, 1930, Bihar Political (Special) Deptt.
19. *The Searchlight*, March 12, 1930.
21. File No. 129 of 1930, Bihar Political (Special) Department, Patna.
22. Majumdar, R.C., *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, pp. 334-336.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 338.
24. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, p. 383.
25. Majumdar, R.C., *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, p. 335.
26. *The Searchlight*, April 2, 1930.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*, April 6, 1930.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*, April 9, 1930.
34. *Ibid.*, April 6, 1930.
35. File No. 139/1930, extract from letter (D.O. No. 3375/S.B. Confidential) dated 5th April, 1930, from Deputy Inspector-General of Police (C.I.D.), Patna, to the Superintendent of Police, Saran, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
36. Majumdar, R.C., *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, p. 339.
37. *The Searchlight* April 9, 1930.
38. *Ibid.*
39. *Ibid.*
40. Bareja is a village in Manjhi Police Station of Saran district. It is situated at a distance of 3 miles east from Daudpur Railway Station (N.E. Railway).
41. *The Searchlight*, April 9, 1930.
42. *Ibid.*
43. File No. 139/1930, extract from the copy of report from the Superintendent of Police, Saran, dated April 8, 1930, Bihar political (Special) Department, Patna.

44. Goseakothi is in the Basantpur Police Station of Saran district.
45. *The Searchlight*, April 11, 1930.
46. *Ibid.*
47. Hajiapore is quite close to Gopalganj. The nearest Railway Station was Harkhua (N.E. Rly.) (now Gopalganj Railway Station).
48. *The Searchlight*, April 11, 1930.
49. File No. 139/1930, extract from the report of Deputy Inspector-General of Police, C.I.D., Patna, Memo No. 3547/48 S.B. dated 10th April, 1930, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *The Searchlight*, April 11, 1930.
52. File No.251/1, 1930, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
53. *The Searchlight*, April 11, 1930.
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Ibid.*
56. Nehru, Jawaharlal, *Autobiography*, p. 210.
57. File No. 139/1930, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
58. *Ibid.*
59. Extract from the report of the Superintendent of Police, Siwan, camp-Siwan, letter (D.O. No. 855) dated April 13, 1930.
60. *Ibid.*, (D.O. No. 563) dated April 15, 1930.  
*The Searchlight*, April 16, 1930.
61. *The Searchlight*, April 16, 1930.
62. *Ibid.*, April 25, 1930.
63. *Ibid.*
64. *Ibid.*
65. *Ibid.*
66. *Ibid* , April 21, 1930.
67. Extract from the confidential report of S.A. Khan, District Officer, Saran, letter (D.O. No. 151/C), dated the 14th April, 1930.
68. Extract from the report of the Superintendent of Police, Saran, letter (D.O. No. 563) dated 15th April, 1930, Camp-Saran.
69. *The Searchlight*, April 23, 1930.
70. *Ibid.*
71. Kripalani, Acharya J.B., Professor in G.B.B. College, Muzaffarpur, 1912-17.



72. Extract from the report of the Superintendent of Police, Saran, letter (D.O.569), dated April 18, 1930.
73. *Ibid.*
74. Extract from the report of the Superintendent of Police, Saran, letter no. 621 dated April 24, 1930.
75. Extract from the report of the Superintendent of Police, Saran, letter (D.O. No. 569) dated April 18, 1930.
76. Extract from the report of the Superintendent of Police, Saran, to the Deputy Inspector-General (C.I.D.), Patna, letter (no. 621) dated April 24, 1930.
77. *Ibid.*
78. *Noniya* is a caste who manufactures salt.
79. *The Searchlight*, April 18, 1930.
79. *Ibid.*
80. *Ibid.*, April 25, 1930.
81. *Ibid.*, May 3, 1930.
82. *Ibid.*, April 25, 1930.
83. Extract from the confidential letter (D.O. No. 158/C) dated 20th April, 1930 of District Officer, Saran.
84. *The Searchlight*, April 27, 1930.
85. *Ibid.*
86. Babu Kunwar Singh was a zamindar of Jagdishpore in the district of Shahabad (now Bhojpur) in the State of Bihar. He took leading part in the Great Rebellion of 1857.
87. Extract from the report of the Superintendent of Police, Saran, (letter no. 662) dated 26.4.1930.
88. *Ibid.*
89. *Ibid.*
90. File No. 139/1930, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
91. *The Searchlight*, May 3, 1930.
92. *Ibid* April 29, 1930.
93. Extract from the report of the Superintendent of Police, Saran (letter no. 730) dated April 30, 1930.  
*The Searchlight*, May 3, 1930.
94. Extract from the report of the Superintendent of Police, Saran, (letter no. 730) dated April 30, 1930.  
*The Searchlight*, May 3, 1930.
95. *The Searchlight*, May 3, 1930.

96. Extract from the report of the Superintendent of Police, Saran (confidential letter no. 730) dated April 30, 1930.  
• *The Searchlight*, May 3, 1930.
97. *The Searchlight*, May 3, 1930.
98. Extract from the confidential report of the Superintendent of Police, Saran (letter no. 750) dated May 4, 1930.
99. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. II, pp. 88-89.
100. Majumdar, R.C., *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, p. 343.
101. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. II, p. 90.
102. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
103. File No. 43/1930, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
104. Extract from the weekly confidential diary of the Superintendent of Police, Saran (letter no. 126) period ending 31st May, 1930.
105. File No. 256/1930, Bihar Political (Special) Department. Extract from the report of R. D. Pandey, Deputy Superintendent of Police, in-charge, Siwan-Gopalganj, dated June 30, 1930.
106. This information was given to me by Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, ex-Chief Minister of Bihar, when I interviewed him on June 12, 1973.
107. File No. 256/1930, Bihar Political (Special) Department, Patna.
108. *Ibid.*
109. Extract from the confidential weekly diary of the Superintendent of Police, Saran, period ending 31st May, 1930.
110. *Ibid.*
111. File No. 139B/1930, extract from the confidential weekly diary of the Superintendent of Police, Saran, period ending 8th June, 1930, Bihar Political (Special) Department, Patna.
112. *Ibid.*
113. *Ibid.*
114. *Ibid.*
115. *Ibid.*
116. Information based on the basis of the personal interview of mine with Jhulan Singh.
117. File No. 139 (B)/1930 Extract from confidential weekly diary of the Superintendent of Police, Saran, period ending on 9.7.1930. Bihar, Political (Special) Department, Patna.
118. File No. 18/VIII/1930, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

119. File No. 139 (B)/1930. Extract from confidential weekly diary of the Superintendent of Police, Saran, period ending on 9.7.1930, Bihar Political (Special) Department, Patna.
120. *Ibid.*
121. *Ibid.*
122. *Ibid.*
123. File No. 139 (B)/1930. Extract from confidential weekly diary of the Superintendent of Police, Saran, period ending 9.7.1930, Bihar Political (Special) Department, Patna.
124. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. II, p. 113.
125. File No. 139 (B)/1930. Extract from the confidential weekly diary of the Superintendent of Police, Saran, for the period ending on the 16th July, 1930, Bihar Political (Special) Department, Patna.
126. File No. 139 (B)/1930. Extract from the weekly confidential diary of the Superintendent of Police, Saran, period ending on 23rd July 1930, Bihar Political (Special) Department, Patna.
127. *Ibid.*
128. *Ibid.*
129. *Ibid.*
130. *Ibid.*
131. *Ibid.*
132. *Ibid.*
133. File No. 139(B)/1930. Extract from the weekly confidential diary of the Superintendent of Police, Saran, period ending on 23rd July 1930, Bihar Political (Special) Department, Patna.
134. *Ibid.*
135. *Ibid.*
136. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol II, p. 117.
137. File No. 139(B)/1930. Extract from the weekly confidential diary of the Superintendent of Police, Saran, period ending on 2nd August 1930, Bihar Political (Special) Department, Patna.
138. *Ibid.*
139. *Ibid.*
140. *Ibid.*
141. *Ibid.*
142. *Ibid.*
143. Based on the information given to me by Mangaldeoiji Brahmachari,

through R.K. Sharma, Head of the History Department, Rajendar College, Chapra, Saran.

144. File No. 139(B)/1930. Extract from the weekly confidential diary of
    - the Superintendent of Police, Saran, period ending on the 16th August, 1930, Bihar Political (Special) Department, Patna.
  145. *Ibid.*
  146. *Ibid.*
  147. File No. 139(B)/1930, Bihar Political (Special) Department, Patna.
  148. File No. 339/1930, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
  149. Extract from the confidential weekly diary of the Superintendent of Police, Saran, period ending on 2nd September, 1930.
  150. Report of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee for the week ending on 26th September, 1930.
  151. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. II, p. 122.
  152. Report of the Provincial Congress Committee for the week ending on 26th September, 1930.
  153. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. II, p. 128-129.
  154. *Ibid.*, p. 127.
  155. Extract from the confidential diary of the Superintendent of Police, Saran, dated the 2nd October, 1930.
  156. Extract from the letter (D.O. No. 3029-27) dated 4th October, 1930 from the Superintendent of Police, Saran.
  157. *Ibid.*
  158. File No. 338 of 1930. Extract from the Sonepur Mela Report No. II from the Additional Superintendent of Police Saran dated 4th November, 1930, Bihar Political (Special) Department, Patna.
  159. File No. 338 of 1930. Extract from the Sonepur Mela Report No. III from the Superintendent of Police, Saran dated 5th November, 1930, Bihar Political (Special) Department, Patna.
  160. File No. 437/1930, Communique, Government of Bihar & Orissa, Political (Special) Department dated 4th December, 1930.
  161. *Ibid.*
  162. File No. 437/1930, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
  163. File No. 183X-III/1930, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
- File No. 139(B)/1930. Extract from the report of the Sub-Inspector of police, Bhorey, dated 16.12.1930, Bihar Political (Special) Deptt.

164. *The Searchlight*, December 21, 1930.
165. File No. 59/1932, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
166. *The Searchlight*, January 1, 1931.
167. File No. 49/1931, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
168. *Ibid.*
169. *The Searchlight*, January 1, 1931.
170. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. II, p. 108.
171. He belongs to village Kelharua, Police Station Guthani, district Saran. He is the founder Secretary of Hari Ram College, Mairwa Saran. Above information was given to me by Rajbanshi Singh.
172. Based on the information given to me by Phulan Deo Giri.
173. Based on the information given to me by Mahamaya Prasad Sinha. ex-Chief Minister of Bihar.
174. *The Searchlight*, January 7, 1931.
175. *Ibid.*
176. File No. 25/1931, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
177. File No. 25/1931. Extract from the F.I.R. drawn up by the Sub-Inspector, Basantpur on his own stated u/s 147/279/224/I.P.C. on 26.1.1931, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
178. File No. 25/1931, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
179. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, pp. 437-442.
180. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, pp. 459-461.
181. File No. 25/1931. Extract from the confidential diary of the Superintendent of Police, Saran, week ending on 23.3.1931 and 2.4.1931 respectively, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
182. File No. 25/1931. Extract from the Superintendent of Police, Saran, week ending on the 9th April, 1931, Bihar Political (Special) Department, Patna.
183. *Ibid.*
184. Majumdar, R.C., *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, pp.396-397.
185. File No. 20(A)/1932, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
186. File No. 25/1932, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
187. No. 78/C, The Bihar & Orissa Gazette Extraordinary, 4th January, 1932.

188. File No, 25/1932, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
189. File No. 25/1932. Extract from the copy of F.I.R. lodged by M. Ali, Hassan, S.I. Police, Parsa, Case No. 13 dt. 26.1.32, Bihar Political Dept.
190. File No. 23/1932. Extract from Saran S.R. Case No. 6/32, Report No. IV dated 29.3.1932 from the Superintendent of Police, Saran, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
191. File No. 25/1932, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
192. File No. 150/1932, extract from the report of the Superintendent of Police, Saran, in his letter no. 95/C dated 7th March, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
193. File No. 150/1932, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
194. File No. 27/III/1932, extract from the letter (no. 3952/C) dated 25th March, 1932 of the officiating Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar & Orissa, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
195. File No. 25/1932, extract from the confidential report of the District Magistrate of Saran, dated the 3rd March, 1932 in his letter (D.O. No. 304/C) Bihar Political (Special) Department.
196. File No. 25/1932, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
197. *Ibid.*
198. File No 5 (iv)/1932, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
199. File No. 18/I/.933, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
200. File No. 97/1933, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
201. File No. 21/1934, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
202. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. II, pp. 211-216.
203. Quoted in Tendulkar, Vol. III, p. 313.
204. *Ibid.*, pp. 313-314.
205. *District Gazetteer of Saran*, 1960, p. 210.
206. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, p. 572.
207. Majumdar, R.C., *History of the Freedom Movement in India Congress* Vol. III p. 483.
208. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol I, p. 573.  
Prasad, Rajendra, *Atmakatha*, p. 403.

209. File No. 100/1934, Bihar Political (Special) Department.  
(Jai Prakash Narain is the son of Harkhu Dayal Lal of village Sitab-Diara, Dist. Saran, now his village has been transferred to Balja, U.P.).
210. Bihar & Orissa Gazette, Extraordinary, dated the 9th January, 1937.
211. File No. 79/1934, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
212. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. II, p. 246.
213. *Ibid.*
214. *The Searchlight*, October 14, 1931.

## V

### **SARAN AND THE INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT FROM 1935 TO 1941**

After having witnessed large-scale demonstrations, strikes and boycotts consequent upon the declaration of Civil Disobedience Movement in the early thirties of the twentieth century, there dawned a period of comparative lull in Indian politics from 1935 onwards since Mahatma Gandhi withdrew the said Movement. Besides, the Congress party also became engaged in making necessary preparations for contesting the elections which were to be held under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935 both at the Centre as well as in the provinces.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the Congress workers were also engaged, during this period, in carrying out the constructive programmes as laid down by Mahatma Gandhi. The establishment of All India Village Industry Association was a part of this constructive programme of the Mahatma.<sup>2</sup>

The district of Saran also did not lag behind in carrying out the directives of Mahatma Gandhi towards the implementation of his constructive programmes. It was decided by the Congress leaders of the district to open as many branches of the All India Village Industry Association as possible. With this end in view, in November 1935, Anugrah Narayan Sinha, Secretary, Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, Mathura Prasad of



Saran, Assistant Secretary, Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, Gorakh Prasad and Raj Narain went to Gonda under Police Station, Revelganj of Saran district, to establish a branch of the Village Industries Association there. A meeting of the local Congressmen and others was organised and it was decided to start work in this direction in the villages between Gonda and Seresia under the guidance of Gorakh Prasad.<sup>3</sup> Again in the same month, Anugraha Narayan Sinha, Mathura Prasad, Pandit Girish Tiwary and a few other Congressmen held a meeting in the Sonapur *asharam* where all the speakers emphasised on the importance of establishing branches of the Congress *asharam* in the remote villages of the district as a means for preaching the message of the Mahatma and the ideals of the Indian National Congress.<sup>4</sup>

In the second half of January 1936, Mathura Prasad, Assistant Secretary, Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, forwarded the following circular letter of Rajendra Prasad, President, Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, to all the District Congress Committees as to how to observe 'Independence Day' on the 26th January 1936 : "....The 26th of January is approaching and shall be observed in all places. At every such meeting the resolution attached herewith should be read out in Hindustani or the local language of the place and pass without any speeches :

"It is recommended that the national day be devoted in so far as it is possible, to some special constructive effort and a determination be made to develop greater dedication to the cause of *poorna swaraj*. Hartal should not be observed :

"The 26th of January should be observed with solemnity without coming in conflict with the authorities and there should be no disobedience of orders prohibiting meetings and processions and banning Congress organisation. The following resolution is to be adopted :

"We remind ourselves on this solemn national day, that complete Independence is our birth right and that we shall use all and only peaceful and legitimate means to achieve it. We

shall not rest till we have achieved it. As an essential step in the direction of achieving that end we shall seek to :

- (a) Adopt and promote unity of heart among different communities and to establish complete equality of status among all, irrespective of caste, creed or race.
- (b) To adopt and promote complete abstinence from intoxicating drinks and drugs.
- (c) To promote hand spinning and other village industries and to adopt for personal use khaddar and other products of village industries to the exclusion of their products.
- (d) To abolish untouchability.
- (e) To serve the starving millions in every way we can.
- (f) To engage in all other national and constructive effort.”<sup>5</sup>

On the 17th January 1936, the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa asked the District Officers to report to the Government, the speeches delivered in the meetings on the eve of ‘Independence Day’ celebration.<sup>6</sup>

The ‘Independence Day’ was celebrated on the 26th January 1936 throughout the district of Saran with great enthusiasm under the overall supervision of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee. Large numbers of people assembled in the meeting. No untoward incident, however, occurred on that day.<sup>7</sup>

Though the actual elections were to take place in 1937 but preparations for the same had already started one year earlier. The District Congress Party at Saran geared up its election machinery along with other political parties and canvassing started in the different places of the district for their respective candidates.<sup>8</sup>

Shri Jawahar Lal Nehru and Govind Ballabh Pant visited Bihar in connection with election propaganda. Their visits very much added to the enthusiasm of the masses.<sup>9</sup> Rajendra Prasad visited those places which the former two could not go on account of lack of time so that the whole province might be covered.

As the time of election drew nearer all the contesting parties became active. The government was closely observing the activities of the various political parties and on the 1st July 1936 issued the following instructions regarding the maintenance of adequate vigilance in the coming election :

“With the approach of the first elections under the new constitution, a situation is likely to be developed in the districts which must be watched with care. Electoral propaganda will be undertaken by various parties and interests which are anxious to secure power in the legislatures. Their efforts will be directed towards educating the newly enfranchised voters, most of whom are ignorant of the use of political powers. It is likely that most of this propaganda will be conducted on legitimate and constitutional lines. Intensive electoral propaganda, as such, is a healthy sign that the new constitution is likely to be worked out on reasonable lines. But there is also distinct danger that the attempt will be made, under the guise of electoral propaganda, to foster the growth of a revolutionary mentality in preparation for a fresh campaign of direct action. In this province, such activities are likely to take the form of agrarian agitation. It is necessary to keep careful watch on the speeches, leaflets, manifestoes and other forms of propaganda which are made or issued in pursuance of this form of agitation. It is particularly important that special care should be taken to ascertain the extent to which agitation of this type is having a real and lasting effect on the agricultural population and the nature of the propaganda and its effect, after the first wave of excitement had died away, should be discussed fully in your fortnightly confidential reports”.

The directive further stated :

“As the approaching elections are bound to cause a strong ferment in rural life, the more District Officers and Sub-Divisional Officers can tour in the next six months the better. They should make a point of ascertaining personally the state of feeling, wherever outside agitation has been reported to be effective and of combating any ideas of direct action that have been instilled there. The policy of the Government is that while legitimate electoral activities should be left untrammelled,

the campaign should not be allowed to degenerate into the dissemination of sedition among the masses, the intimidation of opponents and the fostering of a revolutionary mentality among the people. In this connection, I am to remind you that section 7 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1932, which deals with picketing is in force throughout the Province and could suitably be employed to deal with intimidation in connection with agrarian agitation. Sections 7 to 10 of the Bihar and Orissa Public Safety Act have not at present been brought into force, but Government would extend them to any area in which a campaign for the refusal of rent developed.

“It is particularly important that the officers of Government should refrain from any interference with legitimate electoral activities and should not identify themselves with any party. This does not prevent them from giving their advice to party representatives who ask for it. It will also be necessary for them, in conversation with callers and those when they meet in tour, to counter unwarrantable criticisms and attacks which are made on the existing land tenure and revenue system, when these attacks are of a nature which may give rise to disaffection in the district. The dangers involved in any sudden radical alteration of the existing economic structure should be explained especially to members of those classes who are being enfranchised for the first time, while the benefits which the tenantry derive from the tenancy laws and very real advance in the standard of living and wealth in the last twenty year may well be emphasised”.<sup>11</sup>

The latter half of 1936 was spent in brisk canvassing by the different political parties for their respective candidates. The Government on the other hand was quite watchful lest these electioneering campaign should degenerate into some kind of political movement. This see-saw game continued throughout the latter half of the year 1936. Then came the ‘Independence Day’ celebration of 1937.

On the 26th January 1937, the ‘Independence Day’ was celebrated in the district of Saran with great enthusiasm. It is evident from the report of the Deputy Inspector-General of Police, C.I.D. Bihar, dated the 10th February 1937 that at

Siwan, the meeting was held at Sardhanand Bazar between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. The meeting commenced with the usual national songs sung by Shashi Bhushan Sukul and Jagarnath Das Gupta. The national flag was hoisted by Shashi Bhushan Sukul in the absence of Rajendra Prasad, who had gone to Gopalganj. After hoisting the flag Rajendra Prasad arrived and read out the Congress pledge from *The Amrita Bazar Patrika* of the 25th January 1937. He translated the pledge to the audience in simple Hindi.<sup>12</sup> The 'Independence Day' was also celebrated at Chapra. Among the important persons present on the occasion were Sawalia Behari and Bharat Mishra. Sawalia Behari read out the pledge in English and translated the same into Hindi. At Sonapur the 'Independence Day' was observed under the presidentship of Sheobachan Singh. Pledge was read out by him and national song was sung by Sarjug Pathak. Besides this, the 'Independence Day' was celebrated in other parts of the district also which included Ekma, Manjhi, Parsa, Marhowrah etc.<sup>13</sup>

While the whole country was celebrating the 'Independence Day' the people of Bihar went to polls to elect new members for their Provincial Legislature under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

The election to the Legislative Assembly in Bihar was held from 22nd to 27th January 1937. In Saran, Basawan Ram was elected uncontested from Gopalganj West (Harijan Constituency), while Jhulan Singh (Congress) was defeated by Gobind Tiwary, an Independent, who was a nominee of Hathwa Raj from another seat of Gopalganj Constituency. From Siwan, Narain Prasad (Congress) was elected and from Chapra Dwarkanath Tiwary and Prabhunath Singh (both Congress) were elected. Thus the Congress party won by a thumping majority in the district of Saran.<sup>14</sup>

After certain declarations on the part of the British Government, the Congress Working Committee decided at its meeting held at Wardha on the 8th July 1937, that "Congressmen be permitted to accept office where they may be invited there to." But it was made clear that office was to be "accepted and utilised for the purpose of working in accordance with the lines

laid down in the Congress election manifesto and to further, in every possible way, the Congress policy of combating the new Act on the one hand and of prosecuting the constructive programme on the other".<sup>15</sup>

In the month of July 1937, the Bihar Provincial Congress Conference met at Masarakh in the district of Saran under the presidentship of Prof. Abdul Bari. Several leading Congress workers including Rajendra Prasad participated in it. After the termination of the conference when the leaders arrived at Chapra, they learnt that the Governor of Bihar had invited Shrikrishna Sinha, the leader of the Congress Party, to form a Congress government in Bihar.<sup>16</sup> Shrikrishna Sinha accepted the offer of the Governor and thus the Congress came into power in Bihar.

On the 20th July 1937, a Congress Ministry was formed in Bihar with Shrikrishna Sinha as Premier (Chief Minister). It is rather significant that two ministers of the Bihar Cabinet belonged to the district of Saran viz. Dr. Syed Mahmood and Jaglal Chaudhary.<sup>17</sup> For the first time, Congress adopted a positive attitude towards administration and agreed to take up the burden of government.<sup>18</sup>

While contesting the election the Congress party had pledged through its election manifesto that political prisoners would be released as soon as it came into power. Hence the demand was raised that the Congress government should honour its pledges. In order to get their release eight political prisoners, in the Hazaribagh Central Jail, went on hunger strike from the 26th January 1938. The Congress Ministries of Bihar and U.P. wanted to release the political prisoners but the Governor-General issued a directive to the Governors under section 126 of the Act, not to accept the advice of the Congress ministers in this regard since it affected his special responsibility regarding the maintenance of peace and tranquillity of the country. Hence, the Governors did not agree to the release of political prisoners. A grave constitutional crisis arose on the question of the release of the political prisoners. Hence, the Congress Ministry in Bihar resigned in protest on the 15th February 1938. The Congress held that the interference of the Governor-General was a clear violation of

his assurance and amounted to misapplication of section 126 (5) of the Act.<sup>19</sup>

But this political deadlock did not continue for long. An agreement was reached on this question between Mahatma Gandhi and the British Government. Shrikrishna Sinha met the Bihar Governor on the 26th February 1938 and soon after his interview the following joint communique was issued :

“We have discussed at the earliest possible opportunity the situation arising out of the release of those prisoners, who had been classified as political. We have arrived at an agreement in the matter and thus the Hon’ble the Prime Minister and his colleagues have resumed their duties”.<sup>20</sup>

As a result of this agreement a large number of political prisoners were released from the jails. These included Ram Bhawan Singh and Mahanth Ram Mohan Das, both of them belonged to the district of Saran. Ram Bhawan Singh, before he went to jail, was a member of the All India Republican Army which believed in the doctrine of force and violence. They used to throw bombs on the European Officers and on one such occasion, Shri Singh was caught by the police. He was brought to trial in which he was sentenced to 10½ years rigorous imprisonment. Mahanth Ram Mohan Das was sentenced to 10 years rigorous imprisonment in Saran Conspiracy Case of 1931.<sup>21</sup>

The Congress Government of Bihar also resorted to certain measures of social reforms which were not liked by the British Government. One such measure was prohibition. The introduction of prohibition in the district of Saran on 1st April 1938 was looked with apprehension by the British Government because it might create unemployment amongst the Pasis whose number was considerable.<sup>22</sup>

The Socialist Party was also active in the district of Saran. It organised Summer School of Politics at Sonapur which was inaugurated by Subhash Chandra Bose in May 1938. Again the Socialists held a big meeting at Chapra on the 29th May 1938 in which strong anti-British speeches were delivered and the people assembled therein were told not to take any part in

any future war in which Great Britain was involved.<sup>23</sup>

### Kisan Movement in Saran District

• The Kisan Movement gained momentum during these years. The Movement was supported by the Congress and Socialist alike. The Kisan Movement spread throughout Saran district also. Some of the usual demands of the Kisans were abolition of Zamindari system, occupation of 'Baksat' lands by the tenants, recovery of the land which had passed out of ryots' hands due to execution of decrees.<sup>24</sup> Pandit Rahul Sankritayan, President of the Saran Kisan Sabha, made an intensive tour of the district from the 15th to 28th May 1939. He held meetings at Amwari, Kadipur, Baragaon and Chapra. He was also assisted by Swami Sahjanand, leader of the Kisan Movement. These leaders exhorted the Kisans to resort to *satyagraha* to get their genuine grievances redressed. Consequently, *satyagraha* was started by the peasants at Amwari under Siwan Sub-division. The Kisans succeeded in occupying ten bighas of bakast lands.<sup>25</sup>

At Amwari, the *satyagraha* continued till the 9th July 1939. On the 1st of July 1939 there was a clash between the Zamindars and Kisans in which several persons were injured on both sides.<sup>26</sup> In spite of the Second World War the Kisan Movement gradually grew in its intensity and drew the attention of the peasants of Saran district.

### Second World War and the National Movement

The Congress had been anticipating the out-break of the Second World War for some time. It had already issued directives to the countrymen not to render any assistance to the British Government in case of declaration of war either with men, money or munitions. The war was declared on the 1st September 1939. India was declared belligerent by the British Government on the 3rd September 1939. On the same day, Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy and the Governor-General of India, declared in a broadcast from Simla that "India will make her contribution on the side of human freedoms as against the rule of force and play a part worthy of her place among the great nations and historical civilizations of the world".<sup>27</sup>



The Working Committee of the Congress met on the 14th September 1939 to consider the situation, and resolved that :

“Our experience in the past—particularly during the last war had clearly shown that no trust could be placed in the war statements and war promises of the British Government or the Government of India and accordingly call upon them not merely to elucidate their position vis a vis the future of India, but address themselves to an immediate application of the principles so elucidated.

“The committee declares that until such a clearing of positions took place, it could not advise the country to extend the fullest measure of co-operation to Government”.<sup>28</sup>

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President, Indian National Congress, conveyed another meeting of the Working Committee at Wardha on October 22, 1939. The committee passed a lengthy resolution calling upon the Congress Ministers to tender their resignations and appealing to the nation to end all internal controversies and to act unitedly in the cause of India's freedom and calling upon all Congress Committees and Congressmen to remain prepared for all developments and eventualities.<sup>29</sup> In pursuance of the resolution of the Congress Working Committee, the Bihar Ministry resigned on the 31st October 1939.<sup>30</sup>

The resignation of Bihar Ministry was welcomed by the people of Bihar. Students' meetings were held at Patna which were addressed by student-leaders including Zawar Husain in which the resignation of the Congress Ministry was welcomed.<sup>31</sup>

On the 29th October 1939, the meeting of the Congress workers of the Saran district was held at Chapra in the Town Hall. About two to three hundred prominent Congress workers of the district were present to consider the then political situation of the country. Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, President, Saran District Congress Committee presided over the meeting. Prominent among those present in the meeting were Messrs. Mohammad Sajjad Hussain, Chairman, Saran District Board, Lakshmi Narayan Singh, Secretary, District Congress Committee and Vice-Chairman, District Board, Rahul Sankrityayan and Bankey Bihari Mishra, President and Secretary respectively

of Saran Kisan Sabha, Biresh Datta Singh, M.L.A., Prabhunath Singh, M.L.A., Ram Basawan Ram, M.L.A., Dwarka Nath Tiwary, M.L.A., Ram Dahin Pandey, Vice-President, Saran Kisan Sabha, Ram Nirekhan Jha, Mehadi Hassan, Ganesh Prasad Verma, Firangi Singh, Kumar Pashupati, Kamla Rai, Jamuna Singh, Basatpuri, Sarju Prasad, Bachchan Prasad, Ramayan Shukla, Ram Binod Singh, Bhagwat Prasad Singh, Mahendra Nath Singh, Chandrika Singh, Pandey Raghunath Prasad, Phulan Deva Giri, Umashankar Prasad, Dharam Nath Singh, Rameshwar Brahmachari, Srimati Janak Dulari Devi and many others.<sup>32</sup>

Speeches were delivered by several speakers and all of them emphasised upon the need of discipline and unity in the Congress. Lastly, Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, President of the meeting, moved a formal resolution affirming the faith of the workers in the policy of truth and non-violence as expounded by Mahatma Gandhi and assuring the Congress High Command their fullest support in the nation's fight for freedom.<sup>33</sup>

When the guns were booming on the war fronts the district of Saran was engaged in the celebration of its 'Independence Day'. On the 26th January 1940, the 'Independence Day' was celebrated with great enthusiasm throughout the Saran district. At Chapra the national flag was hoisted by Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, President, Saran District Congress Committee, in the compound of the Congress Office and the District Board. Mathura Prasad, Secretary, Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, hoisted in the Municipality Compound. A large number of persons participated and joined in singing the national anthem. In the evening, a public meeting was held under the presidentship of Mahamaya Prasad Sinha. The President read out the Congress pledge.<sup>34</sup>

At Dighwara, the 'Independence Day' was celebrated throughout the whole Thana.<sup>35</sup> At Siwan the national flag was hoisted in Shardhanand Bazar and a huge procession was taken out. A public meeting was held in Sakkisarai and was addressed by Gajadhar Prasad and Ganesh Prasad Verma. The Bar Association of Siwan also hoisted the flag on its building.<sup>36</sup>

At Gopalganj, a huge procession was taken out and a public meeting was held under the presidentship of Mahendra Singh alias Jharu Das. Jhulan Singh, Kamla Rai and others addressed the meeting. Similar celebrations were organised at Hathwa, Jamsar, Ganesh Asthan. and Barauli in this Sub-division.<sup>37</sup> \*

At Maharajganj, the 'Independence Day' was celebrated under the auspices of the Thana Gandhian Youth Party. A meeting was held in the compound of the local Thana Congress Committee under the presidentship of Pandit Uma Datta Sharma. The proceeding began with the Bande Matram song. Zakir Hussain Jafri, Secretary, local Gandhian Youth Party, gave a stirring speech on the importance of the 'Independence Day'.<sup>38</sup>

### **The Ramgarh Congress, March 1940**

When the Axis powers were getting victories over the Allied powers and when the Second World War was rather taking a serious turn the 53rd Session of the Indian National Congress was held at Ramgarh in South Bihar in March 1940. Preparations for the session was started from the latter half of the year 1939. The district of Saran contributed much to make the session a success. On October 31 1939, a well attended meeting of the ladies of Chapra town was held in the local Municipal Hall. Prominent among those present were Sail Kumari Devi, Sharda Devi, M.L.A., Shanti Ojha, and Janak Dulari Devi, Miss Prema Ben, C.O.G., a lady volunteer corps of the Ramgarh Congress also attended it. In this meeting a large number of ladies of respectable families offered themselves to work as volunteers on the occasion of the Ramgarh Congress.<sup>39</sup>

Another Public meeting on the same subject was hold at Mubarkpur which was addressed by Firangi Singh, Prabhunath Singh, M.L.A. and Mahamaya Prasad Singh.<sup>40</sup>

The following Persons of Saran were enrolled as members of the Reception Committee of the Ramgarh Session of the Indian National Congress :

1. Nand Kishore Narayan (Siwan).
2. Hiralal Sarat (Dighwara—Saran),
3. Jaleshwar Kumar Singh.<sup>41</sup>

On the 21st December 1939, a meeting of the Congress workers was held at Chapra at the residence of Prabhunath Singh, M.L.A. and it was decided to start a camp of 150 Congress volunteers for Ramgarh Session, in Manjhi of Sadar Sub-division (Saran) from the 1st of January 1940. Prabhunath Singh, Pandit Ram Rajeshwar Prasad Narain Tiwary (alias Sawaliajee), Mahendra Nath Singh and Jamuna Singh were entrusted with the responsibility of running the same.<sup>42</sup>

Shri Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, President, Saran District Congress Committee, made a whirlwind tour of the district to collect funds for Ramgarh Session. He also addressed several public meetings in this connection and was successful in collecting a decent amount as donations for the Ramgarh Session of the Congress.<sup>43</sup>

The Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the Saran District Board were also active for the collection of the funds for the Ramgarh Session of the Congress. Sajjad Saheb toured the Siwan Sub-division and Lakshmi Narayan Singh toured the Sadar Sub-division. All the three Chairmen of the Sadar, Siwan and Gopalganj Local Boards actively worked for collecting the funds for the Ramgarh Session.<sup>44</sup>

Shri Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, President, Saran District Congress Committee, was very particular in the collection of adequate funds for the Ramgarh Session, and due to his untiring efforts, about Rupees five thousand was remitted to Ramgarh from Saran district by the end of January 1940. By this time in Saran district about 125 members were enrolled to the Reception Committee of the Ramgarh Congress. At the instance of Bhagwat Prasad Sinha, Member, Saran District Board the local Merchants' Association, Chapra, donated a sum of Rs. 250/- to the Ramgarh Congress Fund.<sup>45</sup>

The following gentlemen of Saran were returned uncontested as delegates to Ramgarh Congress :

Messrs. Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, President, Saran District Congress Committee, Mohammad Sajjad, Chairman, District Board, Mehdi Hussain, Rambali Singh, Balbhadra Singh, Prabhunath Singh, M. L. A., Bachcha Prasad, Nirekha Ojha, Ram Sewak Singh, Nand Kishore Narain, Sarju Prasad, and Mathura Prasad.<sup>46</sup>

Besides, the following were elected as delegates to the Ramgarh Congress :

Messrs. Vishwanath Sharma, Dwarkanath Tiwary, Brahmachari Jewananda and Firangi Singh.<sup>47</sup>

The Ramgarh Session met under the presidentship of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad on the 19th and 20th March 1940.<sup>48</sup> When the Congress Session at Ramgarh was about to commence at 5.30 p. m. on the 19th March there was a heavy downpour of rain and the whole pandal, picturesquely decorated, became a vast sheet of water. But in spite of the incessant rains, the proceedings of the Congress went on without any let or hindrance.<sup>49</sup> Rajendra Prasad as the Chairman of the Reception Committee, welcomed the delegates.<sup>50</sup> Rajbanshi Singh of village Kelharua, police station Guthani, Saran, was incharge of the 'Tirhut Division's Volunteer Organisation,' and he was also the Field Officer at Ramgarh Congress.<sup>51</sup>

At Ramgarh, Jawahar Lal Nehru moved the resolution on Satyagraha which the Congress Working Committee had already passed. The resolution after being seconded by Acharya Kripalani was voted upon and declared passed.<sup>52</sup>

On the 4th April 1940, in pursuance of the decision of the Ramgarh Session, the Bihar Provincial Congress Working Committee met at Sadaqat Ashram, Patna, under the presidentship of Rajendra Prasad. It resolved that "every Congress Committee be transformed into Satyagraha Committee". It also resolved that in order to fulfil that programme it is necessary that work at *khadi* and *charkha* be taken up in right earnest. All the office-bearers and members of the Congress Committees should begin spinning regularly and thus set an example to others. This Committee also resolved that "a list of those who believe in the efficacy of this programme should be prepared and a camp should be opened for them to give them training and instructions regarding this programme. In the opinion of this Committee the first camp should be held for the members of the Provincial Congress Committee and of

those who believe in this programme and are prepared to abide by the rules of the camp. Having received training in the camp they should go to their respective places and start other camps, thus creating an atmosphere in the entire province which may be convincing to Mahatma Gandhi..." By another resolution this Committee selected Sonepur<sup>53</sup> as the site for the training camp of *satyagrahis* which was scheduled to be held from the 20th to 26th April 1940.<sup>54</sup>

### Sonepur Satyagraha Camp

On the 20th April 1940, Rajendra Prasad arrived at Sonepur from Wardha.<sup>55</sup> At 10 a. m. with the hoisting of the National Flag by him, the *satyagraha* camp was opened at Sonepur in the mango grove, near the Dak Bungalow, about half a mile from Sonepur railway station.<sup>56</sup> Speaking on *satyagraha*, Rajendra Prasad observed : "As soon as we acquire strength we shall achieve our objectives. That strength of heart comes through the cultivation of self-discipline and *charkha* was a means to that end. It was possible to acquire that strength through other sources but *charkha* had the additional advantage of supplying this with cloth. During one week at the camp, every one should spin yarn for one yard of cloth. In this way, if they spin for fourteen weeks, at least one hour daily, they would be able to get yarn for fourteen yards of cloth which was the average requirement per head".<sup>57</sup>

Shri Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, President, Saran District Congress Committee, paid glowing tributes to Rajendra Prasad. He said : We are proud of you, who is one of the highest rank *satyagrahi* in India and we assure you that there are persons in the land of your birth-place <sup>58</sup> to follow you. You are fifty-six but Kunwar Singh, who achieved wonders at the age of eighty, belonged to this very province. Of course his was the strength of sword and yours is that of *satyagraha*. You have acquired mastery in the use of that weapon so that you are now Mahatmaji's right hand. It is our fervent hope that under your leadership here we shall be able to give a good account of ourselves".<sup>59</sup>

In Sonepur *satyagraha* camp 436 miles and 1,100 yards of yarn was spun by the *satyagrahis* enrolled there. Out of this

39 miles and 758 yards of yarn were spun by thirty-five trainees belonging to the district of Saran.<sup>60</sup>

Among the *satyagrahis* mention may be made of the name Prabhawati Devi<sup>61</sup> and Shanti Devi of Saran. Another characteristic feature of the *satyagraha* camp was that amongst trainees there were some Muslims also. Prominent amongst the Maslims were Rafiuddin Rizvi, Manzoor Hassan Ejazi, Razaq and Sajjad of Chapra.<sup>62</sup>

In the Sonapur camp not only miles long yarn were spun but the trainees were also given lessons of self-discipline and *satyagraha*. The essential idea behind this camp seems to be that the leaders by organising such camps in the different places of the province were preparing the people for the coming fight they were to start soon against the British Imperialists.

On the 6th June 1940, the District Congress Committee of Saran, met at Chapra in the Town Hall under the presidentship of Mahamaya Prasad Sinha. Dr. Syed Mahmood, Mathura Prasad and Jaleswar Prasad were the main figures who participated in the meeting. In this meeting it was decided to start the *satyagraha* Training Camp at Maharajganj from the 9th June, 1940.<sup>63</sup>

The 'Saran District *satyagraha* Training Camp' was opened in the afternoon of the 9th June 1940 by Mahamaya Prasad Sinha. Mahamaya Prasad Sinha explained the significance of the camp, the meaning of the *satyagraha* and also requested the workers to take up training like disciplined soldiers of *satyagraha*.<sup>64</sup>

A large number of *satyagrahis* joined the camp. Prominent amongst them were Messrs. Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, Lakshmi Narain Singh, Vice-Chairman, District Board, Saran, Chandrika Singh and Kamla Rai, Chairman of Siwan and Gopalganj Local Boards respectively. Mahendra Nath Singh Uma Shanker Prasad, Ram Nirekha Ojha, Saryug Prasad, Vakil, Pandit Dwarkanath Tiwary, M.L.A., M. Salim, Bhagwati Devi, sister of Rajendra Prasad, Dharmdeo Lal and besides these persons, several Congress workers of the district also joined the camp.<sup>65</sup>

The constructive programmes of the Congress were given effect to by the leaders of the Saran District Congress Committee. Spinning was one such item of the programme. In the first week of July 1940, 'Spinning Day' was observed at different places of Saran. On this day Congress spun hundreds of yards of yarn symbolising the unity and the strength of the Congress.<sup>66</sup>

#### **Muslim League Conference at Chapra April, 1940**

Unfortunately communal bitterness was growing between Congress and the Muslims. In his Presidential address at Ramgarh Session of the Congress, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad while emphasising the heritage of common nationality between Hindus and Muslims in India also observed :

"This thousand years of our joint life has moulded us into a common nationality. This cannot be done artificially. Nature does her fashioning through her hidden processes in the course of centuries. The cast has now been moulded and destiny has set her seal upon it. Whether we like it or not, we, have now become an Indian nation, united and indivisible".<sup>67</sup>

The contention of Maulana Azad was not accepted by the leaders of the Muslim League. Within a few days of Ramgarh Session, the leaders of the Muslim League, on the occasion of the 27th Session of the League, held at Lahore in March, 1940, asserted that "the Muslims are not a minority" but a "nation" and they "must have their homelands, their territory and their state (i.e. Pakistan)" that is, "the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the north-western and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute an Independent State in which the constituent elements shall be autonomous and sovereign".<sup>68</sup> Many Muslims from Bihar attended the Session of the League at Lahore.

There was a conference of the Muslim Leaguers of the district at Chapra on the 13th and 14th April 1940. Chaudhuri Khaliq-ur-Rahman of Lucknow was the principal speaker. He appealed to the audience to support Mr. Jinnah and the Lahore Resolution and urged that the Muslims should close their ranks.



On the 19th April 1940, meetings were held at different places in Bihar to observe 'Pakistan Day', in which the Lahore Resolution about partition of India was read and passed.<sup>69</sup>

### Booklet Published From Chapra Proscribed

The Deputy Inspector-General of Police, C.I.D., in his letter (no. 9264-SB) dated 13th July 1940 sought the order of the Government of Bihar to proscribe a booklet in Hindi entitled "Bhartiya Sankhnaad" edited and published by Tribhuwan Nath 'Azad', Nath Kutir, Chitrajan Road, Chapra, and printed by J.P. Aroda at Lakshmi Press, Benares. This book was proscribed in 1930 under notification no. 6796/C dated 6.10.1930 but the proscription order was cancelled (Notification No. 112/C) on 16.2.1938.<sup>70</sup>

A few lines of the book are quoted here with English translation :

अब सर पर सरकार न हो-  
हम दीनों को लूट सताकर  
शासक यह हथारा न हो ॥ अब सर०

पृष्ठ-६

जग में इस भारत को ही क्यों,  
ज्ञान न हो हथियार न हो ॥ अब सर०  
मुखों दिन दिन मेहनत करते  
आह वही आहार न हो ॥ अब सर०  
मोहन देश शिकार न हो अब,  
यों जीवन स्वीकार न हो ॥ अब सर०  
देश हमारा, मजा को ले ।  
हमको कुछ अधिकार न हो ॥ अब सर०  
जब तक शर्मा जावें न गोरे,  
देश का बेड़ा पार न हो ॥ अब सर०

(English translation—page 6)

Now there be no Government at the head,  
Having looted and oppressed us who are poor,

This administration should not be the murderer.  
 Why India alone in the world should have no wisdom  
 or weapon,  
 Being hungry they work day in and day out,  
 Oh ! there is no food for them,  
 Mohan ! the country now should not fall prey to none,  
 Such life should never be accepted.  
 The country is ours, but who enjoys ?  
 We have not been given the least power.  
 O' Sharma, so long the whites do not quit,  
 The country cannot steer clear through.

पृष्ठ-६

छुड़ा के गुलामी से भारत को फौरन  
 तुम्हें इनसे बदला चुकाना पड़ेगा,  
 जो मालों खजाना वो ढोले गये हैं,  
 उसे फिर से वापस दिलाना पड़ेगा ।  
 हुये हैं शहीद वतन जिनके अब तक,  
 उन्हें फिर से जग में बुलाना पड़ेगा ।

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Having freed India from slavery soon,  
 You will have to take revenge from them,  
 Whatever the wealth and the treasure  
 they have carried away,  
 You will have to get these disgorged from them.  
 All those who have become martyrs for the  
 cause of the country so far,  
 You will have to call them back into this world.<sup>71</sup>

The Government of Bihar (Notification No. 2084/C) on the  
 29th July 1940, again proscribed "Bhartiya Shankhnad" on the  
 ground that the said pamphlet contains something which is  
 punishable under section 124/C of the Indian Penal Code.<sup>12</sup>

### Individual Civil Disobedience

In response to the Congress offer of cooperation, the  
 Viceroy issued a new statement on 8th August 1940 afterwards

known as 'August Offer'). After reiterating the October statement about Dominion Status it proposed an immediate expansion of the Governor-General's Executive Council and the establishment of a War Advisory Council. It conceded the Congress demand for a Constituent Assembly to frame the Indian Constitution, though it was to meet after the war was over. At the same time it also accepted Jinnah's demand by saying that the British would accept any system of Indian Government : "whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements in India's national life".<sup>73</sup>

The 'August Offer', however, failed to satisfy either the Congress or the Muslim League. So the Mahatma began the Individual *satyagraha* campaign on the 17th October 1940 by selecting one individual at a time to go out in the street shouting anti-war slogans and get arrested.<sup>74</sup>

As usual the Bihar Government again became apprehensive and took the necessary measures to crush the Individual *satyagraha* Movement. As early as August 1940, the Bihar Government issued the following directive to its officers that "their general policy" should be "to take immediate action in all directions to nip any such movement in the bud and to prevent it from developing".<sup>75</sup>

In Saran, on the 28th November 1940, individual *satyagraha* was started by the District Congress President, Mahamaya Prasad Sinha. He started from his village Patheri<sup>76</sup> where he was garlanded by his old mother and walked up to Maharajganj. He uttered anti-war slogans and appealed to the people to march forward under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership.<sup>77</sup> Later on Mahamaya Prasad Sinha was arrested and sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment for offering *satyagraha* at Maharajganj and was transferred from Chapra jail to Hazaribagh Central Jail.<sup>78</sup>

On the 17th December 1940, Mahatma Gandhi suspended the campaign. Again on the 5th January 1941, the campaign was resumed. List of *satyagrahis* were prepared by the local Congress Committee for offering the *satyagraha*.<sup>79</sup>

On the 26th January 1941, the 'Independence Day' was celebrated in the Saran district with great fervour. The students.

took a prominent part in the celebration of 'Independence Day'.<sup>80</sup>

Shri Siya Bihari Sharan of village Harkhua, police station Gopalganj offered individual *satyagraha* and was imprisoned in February 1941, for two weeks rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rupees thirty or one month further imprisonment. He was transferred to Hazaribagh Central Jail from Gopalganj and was released after one and a half months imprisonment.<sup>81</sup>

On the 17th April 1940, the Working Committee of Bihar Provincial Congress Committee met under the presidentship of Rajendra Prasad at Sadaqat Ashram, Patna, to review the progress of the 'individual Satyagraha' movement. Rambinod Singh was appointed as the District *Satyagraha* Officer for Saran district.<sup>82</sup>

The third phase of *Satyagraha* commenced by the middle of April 1940. Mahadeo Lal, Vice-Chairman, Local Board, Saran and President, Union Board, Guthani (Saran) resigned from the two posts consequent upon his offering *satyagraha*. He offered *Satyagraha* on the 23rd April 1941, but was not arrested.<sup>83</sup>

On the same day (i.e. on the 23rd April, 1941) Brahmdeo Narain Sinha, Member, District Board from Marhowrah Thana offered *satyagraha* but he too was not arrested.<sup>84</sup>

Shri Rajendra Prasad addressed a crowded meeting at Chapra on the 27th April, 1941. He explained the duties of a non-arrested *satyagrahi*. *Satyagrahi* must move from one village to another explaining to the people the significance of *Satyagraha* and the present position and policy of the Congress. They must not go out in batches of more than two to three. Promoting spinning and weaving, preaching communal amity and removing untouchability were the main items on the constructive side to which a *satyagrahi* should devote himself.<sup>85</sup>

Shri Rambinod Singh, Saran District *satyagraha* officer, presented to Rajendra Prasad a purse of Rs. 301/- on behalf of the Congress workers of Saran, and assured him of their loyalty to the Congress and their preparedness to carry

out the programme.<sup>86</sup> He also wrote from Chapra on April 30, 1941, which was published in the Indian Nation on May 3, 1941 :

"In the district of Saran 489 *satyagrahis* were permitted by Mahatma Gandhi to offer *satyagraha* so far. Out of this number 174 offered *satyagraha* in which 50 have been sentenced to various terms of imprisonment and fines and 124 have not been arrested and now they were doing constructive work in their respective *thanas* throughout the district, 315 have not offered *satyagraha* as yet. I have fixed the dates of each one of them to offer *satyagraha* and which is to be completed before the 15th of May 1941. In each *thana* one incharge has been nominated to see the work completed before the said date and to keep the District Congress Committee in touch with the various activities of their respective location.

"I have also fixed the dates of the members of the local bodies who have been permitted by Mahatma Gandhi whose names are given below.

"According to the Provincial Congress Committee circular I have asked all the leaders of the Congress Party in District Boards as well as of the various Local Boards to let me know by which dates they intend to fulfil the mandates of the Provincial Congress Committee in which they have been asked to resign their seats and have their successors elected before they offer *satyagraha* and which they should do as soon as possible.

Following are the names of members of local bodies whose dates for offering *satyagraha* have been fixed :

"Messrs. Lakshmi Narain Singh, Vice-Chairman, District Board, Jagarnath Prasad Singh, Jamuna Prasad Singh, Mahendra Nath Singh, Bhagwati Prasad Singh, Braj Bhushan Tiwary Raj Narain Tiwary, Ram Raksha Sahu, Janardan Bhagat, Ramdeni Rai, Nageshwar Singh, Bachan Misir, Jagarnath Sharan Singh, Dharam Nath Singh, Tribhuwan Nath Pathak, Rameshwar Brahmachari, Ramchandra Jaishwal.

"It should be recalled that 6 members of the District Board have already offered *satyagraha* and their names are : Messrs.

Basudeo Narain (not arrested), Dharam Deo Lal (Vice-Chairman, Local Borad, Siwan-not arrested), Ramayan Shukul (not arrested), Mrs. Shanti. Ojha (not arrested), Messrs. Prabhunath Singh (arrested and sentenced), Mahamaya Prasad Sinha (arrested and sentenced). Further list of Satyagrahis is being prepared to be submitted to Mahatma Gandhi for approval."

The following persons of Gopalganj Sub-division (Saran) offered *satyagraha* in the latter week of April, 1941, by shouting anti-war slogans in different villages but they were not arrested, viz.

*Name of the satyagraha Place of satyagraha Date of satyagraha*

1. Shivpujan Singh	Rani Bazar	April 11, 1941.
2. Shri Chandragokul Singh	Rajwahi	April 12, 1941.
3. Shri Nakhlaljee	Gopalganj	April 12, 1941.
4. Shri Chandrama Singh	Semrahi	April 14, 1941.
5. Shri Shankar Roy	Hajiapore	April 14, 1941.
6. Shri Bijuli Singh	Manjha	April 15, 1941.
7. Shri Manohar Mahto	Dharamparsa	April 15, 1941.
8. Shri Binda Singh	Manjha	April 15, 1941.
9. Shri Jamuna Singh	Dharamparsa	April 15, 1941.
10. Shri Saklanand Mishra	Dharamparsa	April 15, 1941.
11. Shri Jugal Singh	Bhojali	April 16, 1941.
12. Shri Kavaleshwar Rai	Sasamusa	April 16, 1941.

About 20 non-arrested *satyagrahis* of Manjhi, police station under the leadership of Pramatta Singh and about two dozens of Darauli police station under the leadership of Pandit Ramayan Shukla moved from village to village and held meetings, uttered slogans and delivered impressive speeches.<sup>88</sup>

The following persons of Saran district offered Satyagraha and were awarded punishment viz.

<i>Name of Satyagrahis</i>	<i>Place of Stayagraha</i>	<i>Punishment offered</i>
1. Shri Harihar Singh, President,	Amdarhi P. S. Ekma.	Six month R. I. and fined Rs. 40/-in

Ekma Union Board.		default another term 3 months punishment.
2. Shri Ram Naresh Singh, President, Thana Congress Committee, Ekma.	Ekma Bazar	Both were sentenced to imprisonment of 9 months each and
3. Shri Tribhuwan Nath Pathak, Secretary, Thana Congress Committee, Chapra,	Chapra	finned Rs. 50/-in default to undergo further sentence to 3 months. <sup>89</sup>

In Guthani police station Dharamdeo Lal moved from village to village with a band of non-arrested *satyagrahis*. Guchilall of Guthani offered *satyagraha* but was not arrested.<sup>90</sup>

Till the 15th May 1941, 318 persons had offered Satyagraha in the district of Saran.<sup>91</sup>

The following gentlemen of Saran were also sentenced for offering *satyagraha* : Mahendra Singh (Parimal) of Marhowrah one year rigorous imprisonment and fine Rs. one hundred in default 4 months rigorous imprisonment, 'A' class. Suraj Missar of Barharia—one week rigorous imprisonment and fine Rs. 25/-.<sup>92</sup>

On the 4th June 1941, Mahesh Sharan, Advocate, Siwan, son of Ishwar Sharan, Advocate of Allahabad was sentenced to undergo rigorous imprisonment for one year by the then Sub-Divisional Officer, Siwan for shouting anti-war slogans in a public meeting at Munarpatti under the Raghunathpur police station.<sup>93</sup>

Till the 7th June 1941, 331 persons of Saran had offered *satyagraha*. Out of this number, 57 were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment and fine and 274 were arrested. One hundred and thirty two *satyagrahis* who had signed the pledge and were permitted by Mahatma Gandhi to offer *satyagraha* had not offered the *satyagraha*. Therefore they were asked by the officials of Saran District Congress Committee to explain the reasons for the same.<sup>94</sup>

On the 9th June 1941, Siwan Town Congress Committee organised a meeting in the Edward Memorial Park under the presidentship of Kapildeo Sahay, pleader. This meeting was attended by a large number of ladies also. The main speakers were Deepaji, Shyam Nandan Singh, M.L.A., Ganesh Prasad Verma, and Gadadhar Prasad Shrivastava. Topics such as "present war and duty of the Indians towards it as chalked out by Mahatma Gandhi" and "Hindu-Muslim unity" were discussed in the meeting.<sup>95</sup>

Shrimati Tara Rani Shrivastava of village Pachlakhi, police station Mairwa (Siwan)<sup>96</sup> who had been recently released from Lucknow Jail, explained the significance of the Satyagraha Movement.<sup>97</sup>

After the expiry of the term of imprisonment Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, the first *satyagrahi* of the Saran district and Prabhunath Singh, M.L.A. arrived at Chapra Railway Station from Hazaribagh Central Jail. There they were accorded enthusiastic welcome.<sup>98</sup>

In Siwan there started the celebration of 'Gandhi Jayanti' from the first week of September 1941. On the 4th September 1941, it was organised under the presidentship of Pandit Bhumitra Sharma. Lakshmi Narain Singh explained the need for observing 'Gandhi Jayanti'. Mahamaya Prasad Sinha also dwelt on the importance of patronising *khadi*, as was said by Gandhiji so many times. He appealed to all to devote their times as much as possible for country's freedom. He further said that *khadi* was the only way to bring *swaraj* in India. Ganesh Prasad Verma, a local leader, also participated in the function. He appealed to the people to make the 'Jayanti' successful by purchasing *khadi hundis*.<sup>99</sup>

As directed by Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, the following twenty-four out of twenty-eight members of the Saran District Board elected on the Congress ticket, tendered their resignation from the office as members of the Board :

Messrs. M. Sajjad, Chairman, Lakshmi Narain Singh, Vice-Chairman, Rambinod Singh, Kamla Rai, Chairman, Local Board, Gopalganj, Braj Bhushan Tiwary, Vice-Chairman,



Local Board, Gapalganj, Chandrika Singh, Chairman, Local Board, Siwan, Dharamdeo Lal, Vice-Chairman, Local Board, Siwan, Firangi Singh, Chairman, Local Board, Sadar, M. Salim, Vice-Chairman, Local Board, Sadar, Nageshwar Singh, Bachan Mishra, Ramdeni Rai, Raj Narain Tiwary, Ram Raksha Sah, Ramayan Shukla, Ganesh Prasad Verma, Umashankar Prasad, Sheosharan Bhagat, Jamuna Prasad Singh, Jagannath Prasad Singh, Basudeo Narain Singh, Bhagwat Prasad Singh, Thakur Prasad and Janardan Bhagat.<sup>100</sup>

The following nominated members of the District Board, Congress Party (Saran) tendered their resignation :

Prabhunath Singh, M.L.A.  
Mahamaya Prasad Sinha  
Ram Prabesh Ram  
Jagannath Saran Singh  
Shanti Ojha.<sup>101</sup>

Following the orders of the Provincial Congress Committee, Messrs. Murli Manohar Lal (Chairman), Bishun Lall Singh (President), Awadh Nandan Prasad, Kedarnath Gupta, Murlidhar Seth, Chunilal, Hakim Jamilurrahman and Abul Hassan resigned from their membership of the Chapra local Municipal Board.<sup>102</sup>

Shri Rameshwar Brahamchari, a Municipal Commissioner of Chapra Municipality on Congress ticket and member of the Working Committee of the Bihar Provincial Municipal Bodies Association, tendered his resignation from the Municipal Commissionership of the Chapra Municipality in obedience to the command of the Congress.<sup>103</sup>

At Revelganj, all the members of the Municipal Board elected and nominated, tendered their resignation from the Board.<sup>104</sup>

The following members of the Chapra Congress Municipal Party tendered their resignation from the Chapra Municipality in obedience of the Congress resolution : Messrs. Chandradeva Narain, Harihar Sharma, Ramchandra Prasad Jaiswal, Badrinath Tivary, Dharamnath Ram, Kumar Pashupati Singh,

Shiva Prasad Sahu, Ayodhya Prasad Gupta, Ramchandra Upadhyaya, Ram Prasad Yadava, Tribhuwan Nath Pathak and Brajendra Bahadur.<sup>105</sup>

\* On the 28th October 1941, Fateh Bahadur and Ramji Pandey, Congress Municipal Commissioner of the Chapra local Municipal Board, tendered their resignation.<sup>106</sup>

Thus all the members of District Board, Local Boards of the district of Saran vacated their offices 'en block' in obedience to the order issued by Rajendra Prasad, on behalf of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee.

On the 9th November 1941, Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit addressed a crowded meeting of twenty to twenty-five thousand people assembled in the Municipal ground at Chapra. The meeting was presided over by Mahamaya Prasad Sinha. Mrs. Pandit laid great stress on the value of constructive programme as initiated and expounded by Mahatma Gandhi from time to time and said that it was the key to success. Exhorting the Congressmen to prepare for greater services and sacrifices Mrs. Pandit concluded : "You are like so many links of the golden chain which Mahatma Gandhi had built up after 21 years of ceaseless efforts and you must not allow yourself to get loose or rusted."<sup>107</sup>

By December 1941, the Bihar Government passed orders for the release of *satyagrahi* prisoners "whose offences had either formal or symbolic in character." From the 4th December started general release throughout India. Jaglal Chaudhary<sup>108</sup> who had been arrested in Purnea district for offering *satyagraha* was released, as also other disobedience-prisoners.<sup>109</sup>

### **Suspension of Individual Civil Disobedience**

The Second World War had taken a menacing turn for the Allied Powers by the end of 1941. The Japanese forces had penetrated into the South-east Asian countries and they had come much nearer to India. Moreover, the Japanese war planes had started bombing the cities of Assam, Bengal and Vizagapatam. These had their impact upon the political

development in the country. The Congress leaders rightly thought that if the Individual *satyagraha* was continued then it might be that the Congress leaders would be put behind the bars at this critical moment. As a result of it the people at large would be deprived of proper guidance and as such it would militate against the interest of the National Movement. Therefore, Mahatma Gandhi suspended the Individual Civil Disobedience Movement and directed the Indian people to remain watchful and to devote themselves to the fulfilment of the constructive programmes of the Congress.<sup>110</sup>

Thus the period between 1935 to 1941 was one of the most eventful periods in the history of the National Movement of Saran. Saran went to polls for the first time in January 1937 under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935 and returned Congress candidates in most of the constituencies. Besides, this period also saw the installation of the first Congress Ministry in July 1937, in which the district of Saran provided two ministers of cabinet rank. Moreover, this period was significant inasmuch as that on the initiative of Mahatma Gandhi All India Village industries Association was formed and its branches were opened in Bihar including the district of Saran.

Besides, in order to continue the struggle for independence and also to keep the people politically engaged Mahatma Gandhi started the individual Civil Disobedience Movement which may be termed as a remarkable event in the history of the National Movement. The individual *satyagraha* Movement became highly popular in the district of Saran and hundreds of people of the district took part in the *satyagraha* and cheerfully went to the jail for their dear motherland. Besides, Saran also contributed to the success of the constructive programme of the Congress and the Congress leaders of the province organised a training camp at Sonepur where lessons were imparted in self-discipline, *satyagraha* and spinning. Hundreds of miles long yarn was spun by the trainees in the camp. Training camps on the model of Sonepur Camp were opened in the different parts of the district of Saran where hundreds of men and women underwent intensive training in

spinning<sup>1</sup> and other allied things. Moreover, this period also witnessed the great catastrophe which engulfed the entire world—that is the declaration of the Second World War which had its impact on the National Movement in India.

### Notes

1. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. II, p. 256.
2. *Ibid.*, 260.
3. *The Indian Nation*, November 15, 1935,
4. *Ibid.*
5. File No. 18/1936, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *The Searchlight*, January 28, 29, 30, 1937.
8. Based on the information given to me by Rajbanshi Singh, village-Kelharua, police station Guthani and Siya Bihari Sharan of village-Harkhua, police station Gopalganj, Saran.
9. Prasad, Rajendra, *Atmakatha*, pp. 465-466.
10. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. II, p. 259.
11. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. II, pp. 278-279.
12. File No. 29/1937, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Based on the information given to me by Jhulan Singh who was also a candidate for the election.
15. Diwakar, R.R., *Bihar Through the Ages*, pp. 663-664.
16. Prasad, Rajendra, *Atmakatha*, p. 476.
17. Diwakar, R.R., *Bihar Through the Ages*, pp. 663-664.
18. Azad, A.K., *India Wins Freedom*, p. 15.
19. Bhagwan, Vishnoo, *Constitutional History of India and National Movement*, p. 242.  
Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. II, p. 300.
20. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. II, p. 300.
21. *Ibid.*, Appendix XXII.

22. File No. 18/4/1938, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
23. File No. 18/5/1938 and 18/6/1938, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
24. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. II, p. 315.
25. File No. 18/6/1939, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
26. Report on Political Events in Bihar for the first half of July, 1939.
27. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. II, pp. 124-127.
28. Sitarmayya, B. Pattabhi, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. II, pp. 129-130.
29. *The Indian Nation*, October 23, 1939.
30. *Ibid*, November 1, 1939.
31. Zawar Husain was the Secretary, Bihar Students Federation. He is a resident of vill. Hussainganj under Siwan Sub-division. At present he is the Vice-Chancellor, Bihar University, Muzaffarpur. Above information was given to me by Shri Husain himself when I met him at Siwan on 22.12.1973
32. *The Indian Nation*, November 2, 1939.
33. *Ibid*.
34. *Ibid.*, January 30, 1940.
35. *Ibid*.
36. *Ibid.*, February 1, 1940.
37. *Ibid*.
38. *Ibid*.
39. *Ibid.*, November 2, 1939.
40. *Ibid*.
41. *Ibid.*, December 9, 1939.
42. *Ibid.*, December 24, 1939.
43. *Ibid*, January 13, 1940.
44. *Ibid*.
45. *Ibid.*, February 4, 1940.
46. *Ibid.*, February 11, 1940.
47. *Ibid*.
48. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. II, p. 166.

49. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. II, p. 367.
50. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. II, p. 167.
51. This information was given to me by Rajbali Singh on my interview with him.
52. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar* Vol. II, p. 369.
53. Sonapur is a place in the district of Saran (North Bihar).
54. Extract from the 'Proceeding Book' of the Working Committee of the Bihar Provincial Congress, pp. 82-85. This 'Proceeding Book' was handed over to me by Gauri Shanker Das, Permanent Secretary, Bihar Provincial Congress Committee. I am thankful to him.
55. Prasad, Rajendra, *Atmakatha*, p. 557.
56. *The Indian Nation*, April 21, 1940.
57. *Ibid.*, April 29, 1940.
58. Shri Rajendra Prasad was born in village Ziradei in the district of Saran.
59. *The Indian Nation*, April 29, 1940.
60. *Ibid.*, April 28, 1940.
61. She was the daughter of a veteran Congress leader of Saran, Braj Kishore Prasad and wife of the Sarvodaya leader Jaya Prakash Narayan.
62. *The Indian Nation*, April 21, 1940.
63. *Ibid.*, June 8, 1940.
64. *Ibid.*, June 13, 1940.
65. *Ibid.*
66. *Ibid.*, July 12, 1940.
67. Dutta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. II, p. 377.
68. Majumdar, R.C., *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, p. 600.  
Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. II, pp. 379.
69. Dutta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. II, p. 378.
70. File No. 334 of 1940, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
71. *Ibid.*
72. *Ibid.*
73. Majumdar, R.C., *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, pp. 605-606.

74. Majumdar, R.C., *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, p. 607.
75. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. II, p. 385.
76. Patheri village is near Maharajganj Railway Station (N.E. Railway) in Sargn District.
77. *The Indian Nation*, November 30 and December 1, 1940.
78. *Ibid.*, December 3, 1940.
79. Majumdar, R.C., *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, p. 608.
80. File No. 16/2/1941, Home Department (Political), National Archives of India, New Delhi.
81. This information was furnished to me by Siya Bihari Sharan.
82. Extract from the 'Proceeding Book' of the Working Committee of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee available at Sadaqat Ashram, Patna.
83. *The Indian Nation*, May 1, 1941.
84. *Ibid.*
85. *Ibid.*, April 29, 1941.
86. *Ibid.*
87. *Ibid.*, May 6, 1941.
88. *Ibid.*, May 15, 1941.
89. *Ibid.*, May 15, and 17, 1941.
90. *Ibid.*, May 17, 1941.
91. *Ibid.*, May 20, 1941.
92. *Ibid.*
93. *Ibid.*, June 7, 1941.
94. *Ibid.*, June 9, 1941.
95. *Ibid.*, June 13, 1941.
96. Her husband, Phulena Prasad Shrivastava was shot dead by the police in 'Quit India Movement' on 16th August, 1942 at Maharajganj (Siwan).
97. *The Indian Nation*, June 13, 1941.
98. *Ibid.*, September 8, 1941.
99. *Ibid.*
100. *Ibid.*, September 26, 1941.
101. *Ibid.*
102. *Ibid.*
103. *Ibid.*, October 1, 1941.

104. *Ibid.*, October 17, 1941.
105. *Ibid.*, October 18, 1941.
106. *Ibid.*, October 31, 1941.
107. *Ibid.*, November 13, 1941.
108. He belongs to police station Garkha, district Saran.
109. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. II, p. 399.
110. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 400.



## **VI**

### **SARAN AND THE QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT OF 1942**

The year 1942 was marked by strenuous political activities in Britain as well as in India.<sup>1</sup> The Second World War had taken an ominous turn for the Allied powers. The Japanese forces were threatening India almost at her very doors. The demand of the Indian people for a National Government at the Centre evoked a countrywide response but it was ignored by the British Government. The Cripps proposals instead of solving the constitutional deadlock further complicated the situation with the result that the political situation in India became highly explosive. At this critical hour, India threw an open challenge to British Imperialism by asking the British Government to quit this country to enable the people as Rajendra Prasad puts it, "to resist whoever wanted to dominate India, whether it be British or Japanese".<sup>2</sup>

The time for decisive action had come and it was essential that the Indian people should be made ready for it. Hence, the need was felt to create public opinion in favour of strong action. As such a number of public meetings were held in the second half of March 1942 in which Congress leaders laid stress on some positive action in the political field. Similar views were expressed by Jaglal Chaudhary, ex-minister of the Bihar Government, in a meeting at Sonapur. Another meeting

was organised at Ziradei, home village of Rajendra Prasad in the district of Saran, under the presidentship of Mahamaya Prasad Sinha. He exhorted the people, who were present in the meeting, to hoard foodstuff instead of money since currency notes were likely to lose their value.

The Working Committee of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee met at Patna on the 15th and 16th April 1942. It endorsed the resolutions of the All India Congress Working Committee rejecting the Cripps proposals. It also accepted the recent resignations of all the members of the Provincial Committee and gave Rajendra Prasad full powers to form his own committee.<sup>4</sup>

On the 30th June 1942 a crowded meeting was held at Sonepur and this meeting passed the resolution<sup>5</sup> expressing its full confidence in Mahatma Gandhi's leadership.

A combined meeting of the Socialists, Kisans and Congressmen which had attracted huge audience was held on the 10th July 1942 at Hassanpura in the Saran district at which Ram Briksha Brahmchari and Ram Bhawan Singh, both ex-terrorists, called on the audience to join Mahatma Gandhi's forthcoming mass movement. They were supported by Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, President, District Congress Committee, who described the proposed movement of Mahatma as last bid for freedom.<sup>6</sup>

### **Quit India Resolution**

On the 14th July 1942 the Working Committee of the All India Congress Committee met at Wardha and adopted a long resolution, generally referred to as the "Quit India" resolution. It renewed the demand that "British rule in India must end immediately" and reiterated the view that the freedom of India was "necessary not only in the interest of the country at large but also for the safety of the world and for the ending of Nazism, Fascism, Militarism and other forms of imperialism, and the aggression of one nation over another...."<sup>7</sup>

On the 7th August 1942, the All India Congress Committee met at Bombay and considered the resolution adopted by the Congress Working Committee. After two days of discussion it

was passed by an overwhelming majority. The resolution was as follows :

“The All India Congress Committee has given the most careful consideration to the reference made to it by the Working Committee in their resolution dated July 14, 1942, and to subsequent events, including the development of the war situation, the utterances of responsible spokesmen of the British Government, and the comments and criticisms made in India and abroad. The Committee approves of and endorses that resolution and is of opinion that events subsequent to it have given it further justification, and have made it clear that the immediate ending of British rule in India is an urgent necessity, both for the sake of India and for the success of the cause of the United Nations. The continuance of that rule is degrading and enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself and of contributing to the cause of World Freedom”.<sup>8</sup>

### **The Violent Outbreaks of 1942**

In the meantime Mr. Y.A. Godbole, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar, issued instructions on the 7th August 1942 (secret no. 3198-C/152/42) to all the District Officers with regard to the policy that were to be adopted in suppressing the violent outbreak that were to follow the Quit India resolution of the All India Congress Committee and informed that as soon as the All India Congress Committee's decision was known, the Government of India would decide what action against the Movement was to begin. Immediately on receipt of the Central Government's signal, the Provincial Government would issue a notification under the Criminal Law Amendment Act declaring the All India Congress Committee and the Working Committee of the Congress (though not the Indian National Congress as such) to be an unlawful association. At the same time Provincial Government would “issue similar notifications under the Criminal Law Amendment Act in respect of (i) the Provincial Congress Committee with its Working Executive and District and Sub-divisional or other local or subordinate committees (ii) the Congress Socialist Party and (iii) other

organisations likely to participate in the Movement or bodies organised under new names but with the object of supporting and carrying on the Movement". The first aim of the government was to be to "deprive the Movement of its organisation by arresting all leaders" and for this the officers mentioned above were supplied a list in two parts, 'A' and 'B'. The list 'A' showed districtwise the more important leaders of the Province, who were expected to organise and participate in the Movement, and 'B' list contained the names of the less important ones. The lists included not only the names of Congressmen as such but also the members of the other parties who, the government believed, would be with the Congress in the Movement. The Magistrates were to commence arresting such persons as soon as they received a signal by telegram or telephone, viz; the single word "ADOLF" on receipt of which the Magistrate at once proceed to arrest under Defence Rules 132 all the persons named in the list 'A'. Similar action would be taken by the Magistrate in respect of persons named in the list 'B' on receipt of signal "BENITO..."

Consolidated list of persons in 'A' list arranged"

### Abbreviations

C — Congress.  
 S — Socialist.  
 T — Terrorist.  
 K — Kisan.  
 L — Labour,  
 F.B— Forward Bloc.

### SARAN

<i>Name</i>	<i>Classification,</i>
1. Lakshmi Narayan Singh	C. I
2. Mahamaya Prasad Sinha	C. I
3. Manik Chand Singh	C. I
4. Satya Narayan Mishra	T.—
5. Krishna Deo Pandey	T. III
6. Ram Binod Singh	C & T. I

7. Ram Briksha Singh Brahmachari	K & S. III
8. Ramjinesh Singh of Sabalpore	K & S. —
9. Tribhuwan Kalwar	K & T. —
10. Rambhawan Singh	S & T. —
11. Jagannath Prasad of Darauli	K & S. —
12. Lal Narayan Prasad of Gopalganj & Chapra	S & K.
13. Nag Narayan Singh of Gopalganj	S & K.
14. Kailash Pandey of Gopalganj	S & K.
15. Jadubir Prasad of Gopalganj	S & K.
16. Siya Saran of Gopalganj	S & K.
17. Bishwanath Prasad (Brahman) of Gopalganj	S & K.
18. Chandra Shekhar Prasad Singh Azad	T. I
19. Ram Ekbal Singh	C & S.—
20. Jagannath Mishra	C. —
21. Basant Nand Giri	S & K & T.-

Names of Rajendra Prasad and Phulan Prasad Verma (a resident of village Jigna, police station Mirganj, Saran) were included in the list of Patna district.<sup>10</sup>

“Consolidated list of persons in ‘B’ list arranged”

<i>Name</i>	<i>Classification.</i>
1. Jhulan Singh	C — I
2. Jaglal Chaudhari, M. L. A.	C — I
3. Pashupati Singh	C & F. B.—
4. Dr. Syed Mahmood	C — I
5. Satya Narayan Singh	S — I
6. Girish Tiwary	C — I
7. Vidya Bhushan Shukul	T — —
8. Prabhunath Singh, M. L. A.	C — I
9. Triloki Singh	T — —
10. Bishwanath Prasad Mishra	C — —
11. Jitendra Nath Sur (a) Guhi Babu	C — —
12. Kamla Rai	C — —
13. Shatrughan Singh	T — —
14. Bhagawati Pathak	T — —

In the morning of the 9th August 1942, Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders were arrested.<sup>12</sup> On the same day at Patna the District Magistrate, Mr. W.G. Archer appeared before Rajendra Prasad at about 10 a. m. Finding him indisposed the District Magistrate sought Government's instructions as to what should be done in such circumstances. He was advised to consult the Civil Surgeon as to whether Rajendra Prasad would be taken out at any distant place in that state of health. On examining him, the Civil Surgeon, Major Muddock, gave the opinion that his health did not permit him to be shifted to a distant place (presumably to Hazaribagh Central Jail). Dr. Raghunath Sharan also examined Rajendra Prasad. Rajendra Prasad was then arrested under section 26 (i) b. Before his departure to jail, a large number of persons had gathered in Sadaqat Ashram and remained standing in torrential rains and as Rajendra Prasad came out smiling he was greeted by national slogans—"Quit India", "Rajendra Prasad Hamare Neta Hain", "Congress Zindabad" and other slogans.<sup>13</sup>

Shri Phulan Prasad Verma of village Jigna, police station Mirganj (Saran) and Mathura Prasad of Saran, were also arrested on the same day (i.e. on the 9th August 1942) at Patna.<sup>14</sup>

On the 9th August 1942, the Government of Bihar issued some notifications (1—C (P), 2-C. (P) and 3-C. (P)) declaring unlawful such bodies as the All India Congress Working Committee and its branches, etc., Bihar Provincial Congress and its branches, etc., Bihar Congress Working Committee and its branches, etc., the Bihar Congress Executive Committee and its branches, etc., all District Congress Committees, all Sub-divisional Congress Committees, all Thana Congress Committees, the Provincial Committee of the Congress Socialist Party, the Council of Action of the Provincial Committee of the Congress Socialist Party and all Local Committees of the Provincial Committee of the Congress Socialist Party.<sup>15</sup>

The news of the arrests of Mahatma Gandhi, Rajendra Prasad and other leaders created great excitement amongst the people of Bihar. On the 10th August there was a complete *hartal* in Chapra Town. Even vehicular traffic had ceased plying on the streets. Manick Chand Singh, Secretary of the Chapra

Town Congress Committee, Pandit Jagannath Mishra along with some others named in the list were arrested by the 10th August 1942. The offices of the District and Town Congress Committees as also the office of the District Congress Socialist Party were seized. *Hartals*, meetings and processions were organised on that day at several other places in the Saran district, such as Revelganj, Sonapur, Marhowrah, Amnaur, Maharajganj and Gopalganj.<sup>16</sup>

On the 11th August 1942, there was an angry and violent demonstrations at Chapra. Large number of students paraded the main roads of Chapra Town shouting the usual slogans. They entered the Chapra Court compound and raided the Bar Library where after entering the hall they seized some of the members and requested them to walk out. The members walked out and the students left the place after breaking some glass panes of the doors. The demonstrators then turned their attention to court rooms and the first to be dealt with was that of the Sub-Judge's court. Here a pleader who was in the midst of the cross-examination was bodily lifted by the students and carried out of the court room. The Sub-Judge stopped all work.

The mob then went inside court room of the District Judge who also acted likewise and left the court room. The students then hoisted the tri-colour national flag at the top of the building of the Civil Court. The work of the court was completely paralysed. The whole court compound was the scene of utter disorder and confusion. The students decided to boycott their schools and colleges until leaders were released.<sup>17</sup>

On the same day (i.e. on the 11th August) at Siwan, there was a complete strike in the D.A.V. College and three high schools of the town. The students paraded the town in a procession and shouted the usual Congresslogans. The procession terminated in a meeting which was addressed by Basudeo Narayan Sinha.<sup>18</sup>

In the evening the houses of Gadadhar Prasad Shrivastava, Dr. Sarjug Prasad Gupta and Pandit Bhumitra Sharma of Siwan were searched by the police with a view to find out copies of the Congress programme but nothing was found excepting a few Congress receipt books.<sup>19</sup>

On the 11th August 1942, a complete *hartal* was observed at Gopalganj. All shops were closed. Students boycotted their schools, formed a procession and paraded the town shouting Congress slogans. Meetings were held, one under *tara baba* tree and another in the *bazar* and speeches were delivered by Kamla Rai, Pandit Giri and some students. By the 10th August three persons had already been arrested by the police.<sup>20</sup>

### **Patna Secretariat Firing and its Repercussions on the District of Saran-(August 11, 1942)**

On the 11 August 1942, the city of Patna witnessed a memorable but a heart rendering scene when some brave young men died by the bullets of the police in the campus of the Patna Secretariat. A big mob had come to the Secretariat and they were raising anti-British slogans. Some of them wanted to hoist the national flag over the Secretariat building. It was a day of heroic martyrdom when some young men sacrificed their lives at the altar of country's freedom. The people were determined to hoist the national flag on the building of the Patna Secretariat, the citadel of bureaucracy, which was one of the main pillars of the foreign rule in the country.<sup>21</sup> With this object thousands of persons, urged by the zeal of intense patriotism, rushed to the eastern gate of the Patna Secretariat by about 2 p.m. The District Magistrate of Patna, the Additional Superintendent of Police, and the Sub-Divisional Officer, Sadar had reached there at about 1.30 p.m. with a strong force of armed police. At about 2.15 p.m. the processionists succeeded in hoisting the 'National Flag' on the eastern gate of the Secretariat and for two hours and a half they struggled hard with the police force and tried to enter inside the Secretariat compound in order to hoist the 'National Flag' on the top of the main building. At 4.57 p.m. under the orders of the District Magistrate, who consulted the Inspector-General of Police and then the Deputy Inspector-General of Police, thirteen or fourteen rounds were fired on the mob by the Gurkha Military Police. As a result of this firing seven students died and several others were seriously injured and some received minor injuries.<sup>22</sup>



Out of seven martyrs, two were the natives of the district of Saran, viz :

1. Shri Umakant Prasad Sinha son of Ram Kumar Sinha of village Narendrapur, Post Office Hussainganj, Police Station Darauli, (a student of Class IX of R.M.R. Seminary, Patna).
2. Shri Rajendra Singh son of Sheo Narayan Singh of village Banwarichak, Police Station Sonepur (a student of Class XI of Patna High English School, Gardani-bagh, Patna).<sup>23</sup>

Several persons of Saran were also injured by the police firing at Patna Secretariat. One of them was Ramyash Sinha of village Ghurapali, police station Ekma (Saran) who was a student of 3rd year science in the Science College, Patna.<sup>24</sup>

The martyrdom of seven young men at Patna on the 11th August at once enkindled a fire throughout the Province, which blazed forth in furious flames seeking, as it were, to consume all that stood for alien domination at the cost of India's due rights of self determination. Those martyrs had, indeed, most nobly vindicated the maxim of 'Do or Die', and many others soon plunged themselves into the stormy ocean of struggle for liberty.

In the evening of the 11th August, a meeting was held in the Chapra Town Hall. Harnarayan Mehta and Jagannath Sinha condemned the Patna Secretariat firing.<sup>25</sup>

On the 12th August Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, President Saran District Congress Committee, was arrested at the Patna Junction Railway Station, on his return from Bombay where he had gone to attend the meeting of the All India Congress Committee.<sup>26</sup>

On the same day (i. e. 12th August) several Congress leaders of Saran including Pandit Ram Nirikshan Ojha along with his wife Shanti Devi and Jagannath Singh 'Parimal' were arrested at Chapra.<sup>27</sup>

At Chapra, the people of the town observed complete *hartal* on the 12th August and national flags were hoisted on the

Collectorate building, Post Office and the Chapra Kutchery Railway Station. Processions were taken out and meetings were organised at Manjhi, Parsagarha, Ekma, Dhatingana (Gopalganj police station), Meerganj, Kateyan, Hathwa, Siwan and Dighwara. It is noted in a police report that Sharda Devi and Sarswati Devi, daughters of Ram Binod Singh, took prominent part in the attack on the Dighwara police station on the 12th August.<sup>28</sup>

On the 13th August 1942, a batch of young men went to Doriganj Ghat (Chapra Mofussil police station) and hoisted the national flag on the I.G.N. Steamer and Doriganj Office. Another batch held a meeting in Revelganj Railway compound and hoisted the national flag on the buildings of the police station and post office. A third party moved through Sonapur and hoisted the national flag on the police station, registration office and post office buildings. This was also followed by others at Garkha and Maharajganj. Pandit Girish Tiwary and Sundar Tiwary addressed a meeting at Siswan and exhorted the people to join the Movement. In the afternoon, the police opened fire on a crowd assembled in a meeting at Siwan (police station Siswan, district Saran). According to Government report, one person was killed and 15 were injured as a result of it. Another meeting at Chainpur (Siswan police station) was addressed by Pandit Girish Tiwary, Shrinivas Prasad and Narain Singh.<sup>29</sup>

On the 13th August 1942, the soil of Siwan became red with the blood of the martyrs. It (13th August) was a market day of Siwan. A big procession (about ten thousand) headed by the students paraded the main streets of Siwan Town and entered into the Siwan Civil Court compound. The Sub-Divisional Officer, Siwan, ordered *lathi* charge on the mob. Seven students were also arrested. This action of the Sub-Divisional Officer greatly excited the people and they assembled in local 'Sarai' to condemn it. In the meantime, police arrived and again the *lathi* charge was resorted to. After some time police opened fire as a result of which Chatu Gir of village Daudpur and Jhagru Chamar died on the spot and Bachchan Prasad, a student of Class VII of local D.A.V. High School and Babu

Ram Pandey expired in the hospital. Dr. Sarjug Prasad of Siwan was also mercilessly beaten. About 152 persons were seriously injured.<sup>30</sup>

Nearly one thousand students headed by Ram Nagina Ray and Prabhunath Tiwary invaded Fden High School, Hathwa on the 13th August. They destroyed the properties of the school. Middle school was also damaged by the students. Then they raided the local Post Office. Telegraph poles were removed and telephone wires were cut down.<sup>31</sup>

On the 14th August, thousands of persons (7,000 according to government estimate) demonstrated at Bhagwan Bazar Railway Station (Chapra Junction) and snatched away revolvers from Captain Mackintosh and Mr. Z. Veard who were travelling in a train.<sup>32</sup> On the same day Ekma police station was raided and national flag was hoisted there. All the papers and furniture of that police station were set on fire.<sup>33</sup>

The Chapra Kutchery Railway Station was burnt by the mob. Railway lines between Chapra Kutchery and Chapra Junction were badly damaged. All the stations between Chapra and Siwan, and between Chapra and Manjhi were set on fire.<sup>34</sup>

The Railway lines between Sonapur and Pahlezaghat were also dislocated as a result of it, the traffic on that line became standstill.<sup>35</sup>

On the 14th August 1942, the mob attacked the Dighwara police station. Furniture were broken and the quarter of the Police Inspector was badly damaged. The police station was closed on that day.<sup>36</sup>

At Sonapur, on the 15th August 1942, a big mob under the leadership of Maheshwar Singh raided the Sonapur Registration Office and its doors were closed with the 'National Lock'. Then the mob attacked the Railway 'shed' and completely damaged it. The mob also invaded the Railway Godown and the goods were destroyed. On this the police force opened fire, as a result of this, Maheshwar Singh, Tajmmul Hossain and some others were killed on the spot.<sup>37</sup> The Sonapur Police Station was closed. However, the national flag was hoisted there.<sup>38</sup>

The Prasa Police Station was attacked by the people on the 15th August. The building was completely damaged. All the records and furniture were burnt by the people.<sup>39</sup>

At Baniapore, on the 15th August 1942, a mob led by Shital Singh, Phulena Tiwary and Gopal Tripathy raided the local Post Office. Telephone lines were cut and all the furniture and papers were set on fire. The Post Offices of Lahladpore, Dayalpur and Sahajitpore were also burnt by the mob. The mob also invaded the Baniapore Police Station and the papers and furniture there were badly damaged.<sup>40</sup>

District Board roads also were damaged at several places. All the important bridges between Chapra and Siwan were damaged. Chainwa Railway Station was also burnt by the people.<sup>41</sup>

At Masarakh, the Railway lines between Rajapatti and Marhowrah were dislocated, wires were cut. Masarakh Railway Station was set on fire, later on Masarakh Police Station and Post Office were locked by the mob.<sup>42</sup>

On the 15th August the Basantpore Registration Office was raided and locked by the mob. To paralyse the communication, the District Board roads were cut at several places. At Baikunthpur the roads and bridges were damaged. Post Office was attacked and locked.<sup>43</sup>

Thus, by the middle of August 1942, the situation was pretty serious in the district of Saran. This was beyond the control of the government. It is evident from the report of the Superintendent of Police, Chapra dated 15th August that "the situation has degenerated utterly and complete chaos and lawlessness prevail". Regarding the attitude of the lower cadre policemen, the Superintendent observed :

"We have been watching the attitude of the Constabulary for the last two days and regard their attitude with grave apprehension. Wherein we have attempted to clear crowds by *lathi* charge, they have been done the minimum that is possible, and it is only the officers who have done all that is possible. The armed police is probably better in this respect, but we do not put much reliance on the *thana*, town outpost and ordinary reservemen. They are likely to fail us in a crisis."<sup>44</sup>

On the 16th August 1942 at Maharajganj a procession paraded the *Bazar* and then raided the Post Office there. Papers were burnt and telegraph wires damaged, national flag was hoisted on the Post Office building, then the mob went to the Railway Station and set the Station building to fire, then they attacked the Registration Office, the national flag was hoisted there. For the second time the mob attacked the police station which was led by Phulena Prasad Shrivastava.<sup>45</sup> He was assisted by his wife Tara Rani Shrivastava and Deosharan Singh of village Sihauta. When they wanted to capture the *thana* building the militarymen opened fire. On account of the firing of the militarymen Phulena Prasad Shrivastava, Deosharan Singh and Shubh Lal Prasad of village Juafar, Police Station Basantpur died of bullet injury.<sup>46</sup> Besides them several other received serious injury. The death of so many persons greatly agitated the mob and they decided to retaliate. The Magistrate who had ordered firing, on seeing the violent mob, took to his heels. The mob attacked the Police Station and burnt it to ashes. The houses of the Chaukidars and Dafadars, who had taken part in the firing, were also set on fire.<sup>47</sup>

At the end of August 1942, the houses of Pandit Uma Datta Sharma, Gaya Prasad, Gorakh Singh of Maharajganj and Chandra Prasad of Rukundipur, police station Maharajganj who had participated in the August disturbances, were attacked and burnt by the British soldiers who were commonly called 'Tommies'.<sup>48</sup>

At Guthani, on the 16th August 1942, Rajbanshi Singh of village Kelharua, with the help of Dharamdeo Lal of Bhalua and several others, hoisted the national flag on the local police station.<sup>49</sup> The police station was locked by the people, which was re-opened by the military force on the 3rd September 1942. Rajbanshi Singh was arrested and sentenced to two year's rigorous imprisonment.<sup>50</sup> The police raided the Congress office of police station Guthani and damaged its properties. Raghunandan Das was also arrested by the police. The house of Madan Kanu, shops of Bishwanath, Munilal Kunj Behari were looted by the police. On the 13th September while Dharamdeo Lal, Sadhu Sharan Mishra, Radha Raman Dubey

and Rambarai Chaudhary went to recover the seized Congress *ashram* from the possession of the police, they were arrested.<sup>51</sup>

On the 16th August 1942, national flag was hoisted at Raghunathpur and Barauli Police Stations and other Government offices.<sup>52</sup>

On the same day (i.e. on the 16th August) the procession headed by Bahuria Ramswaroop Devi of Amnaur estate, ladies of Mehta's family<sup>53</sup> and several other ladies hoisted the national flag on the police station and Post Office at Marhaura. On the 18th August, the police opened fire in the garden of Shri Mehta where the people had assembled for the meeting to discuss their future programme. Several persons were injured and some were killed including Ramjivan Singh. By way of retaliation local people also attacked the European soldiers and they were successful in killing five of them amongst whom one belonged to the officer rank and four others were of Yorks and Lancs Regiments.<sup>54</sup>

On the 7th August, the people raided Darauli police station. They burnt the police station and damaged the roads and the post offices of village Trikalpur, Jahanghat and Sheopur Andar. The police raided the village of Darauli on the 28th August and they burnt the houses of Ramayan Shukla, Bishwanath Sharma and Madhusudan Sah. On the same day, some policemen, while returning to Siwan from Darauli, burnt the house of Basudeo Narayan of Jajore and damaged the shop of Ram Nandan Sah of village Ashao. Next day some policemen again came to Darauli and looted the properties of Tapeswar Tiwary and Dinesh Chandra, Bishwanath Prasad and Rambarai Singh. On the 30th August, Ramawtarji Arya and Rambali Dubey, the Headmaster of the school were overpowered by the police and their hair and eyebrow completely removed by the policemen.<sup>55</sup>

On the 17th August 1942, Jamuna Singh, pleader, addressed a meeting in the Chapra Town Hall in which he exhorted the audience to damage the important communication so that their repair might take a long time. Immediately after the meeting a mob went to Railway Station and burnt the loco-shed<sup>56</sup>

On the 17th August 1942, a mob of five thousand men headed by Mahendranath Singh, Sukhdeo Prasad and others came to Manjhi police station and dragged out the police officers and others of the police station on the road where they were kept in virtual confinement for sometime. Then the *thana* building including government documents and furniture were completely burnt.<sup>57</sup>

In Gopalganj Sub-division of Saran district, the students of Kuchaikote with the help of the local people hoisted the national flag on 18th August. At Meerganj national flag was hoisted on the police station by a mob of five thousand, headed by Prabhunath Tiwary, Shrikrishna Prasad Sinha, Shiv Sharma Tiwary, Narmadeshwar Prasad and several others. At Kateyan, the national flag was hoisted by the people on the police station.<sup>58</sup> The police looted and burnt the house of Mahadeo Rai of village Khurhuria of the said police station.<sup>59</sup> At Baikunthpur, the mob raided the police station on the 20th August and burnt the building and government papers of the *thana*. On the 28th August the military police raided some of the villages and set on fire the houses of Kalicharan Thakur of village Bashan, Durga Singh of Hamidpur and Kawleshwar Rai of Kartarpur and a few others.<sup>60</sup>

Between Sasamusa Railway Station and Jalalpur Railway Station, the telephone wires were cut and telegraph poles were removed by the people. On the 18th August a big mob assembled at Sasamusa Railway Station and burnt the station on the same day.<sup>61</sup>

On the 19th August the military police led by Mr. Tenbrook arrived at Dighwara and opened fire. As a result of shooting, Sita Ram Singh, Harinandan Prasad and Sahbir Sah were killed, several others were severely injured including Jadunandan Singh and Mahesh Prasad. They also burnt the godown of Hiralal Saraf and Nawal Prasad on the same day. They also burnt the house of Guru Sahai Sah of Sitalpore. Next day Mr. Tenbrook burnt the house of Rambinod Singh. After two days, Mr. Tenbrook again raided the village of Malkhachak and attacked the house of Ram Nand Singh, but he had fled away with his family. His house was burnt by the police. As a result

of police firing Narain Singh was killed in the Railway compound near Malkhachak.<sup>62</sup>

On the 22nd August 1942, troops also fired on the mob at Garkha as a result of which two persons were killed and two were injured. One of the persons killed was Indradeo Chaudhary, son of Jaglal Chaudhary. Jaglal Chaudhary was himself arrested on the 23rd August at Basantpur. Some others arrested were Rajeshwar Patel, Dr. Gulzar, Kedar Singh and Sheo Nandan Prasad.<sup>63</sup>

The district of Saran was considered as highly dangerous by the British Government. This is evident from a letter of the Bihar Government (Secret No. 575/G B.) dated 22nd August 1942 which was sent to Mr. Linlithgow, the then Governor-General of India viz : "...Saran District, of which Chapra is the headquarters, will require a good deal of clearing up. It is notoriously a criminal district where it is difficult to distinguish between a dacoit and next man..."<sup>64</sup>

On the 23rd August 1942, Mr. Linlithgow sent the following wire to the then Secretary of State for India, Mr. Amerey, which clearly shows that the district of Saran was actually considered a dangerous district by the British Government. He wired : "...Bhagalpur and Saran districts are the areas which are now causing most anxiety."<sup>65</sup>

At Mairwa, the military police came from the direction of Gorakhpur (U.P.) and burnt the Mairwa Khadi Bhandar and arrested several persons there. Later on, a force arrived from Chapra which burnt the Mairwa Ashram and the houses of Sheopujan Chaudhary and Jang Bahadur Singh of village Thepahan, police station Mairwa. On the 23rd September, 1942, as a result of the violent action of the British troops, the inhabitants of villages Jamapur, Purwal and Ziradei rushed towards the nearest Railway Station Bhantapokhar (now Ziradei Station). In the meantime, a special train was proceeding towards Mairwa with high police officers, British troops and engineering staff. It was intercepted by the mob near Thepahan (between Bhantapokhar and Mairwa Railway Stations). The troops opened fire, as a result of which some were killed and



some injured. Amongst those shot dead were Bodh Barai of village Ziradei and Ramsevak Rai of village Thepahan, who was standing on his doorway, received bullet injury on account of which he died within a week.<sup>66</sup> Later on Bhandapokhar Railway Station was burnt by the mob. Sheopujan Chaudhary, a local leader was convicted for 45 years for his subversive activities. The matter was taken to the Privy Council which reduced the sentence to seventeen years only.<sup>67</sup> Jang Bahadur Singh was kept as a security prisoner.<sup>68</sup>

Mairwa Railway Station Godown was damaged by a violent mob, consequently the police opened fire as a result of which Ramdeni son of Sheoraj Kurmi of village Langarpura, Police Station Mairwa, died.<sup>69</sup>

Shrimati Prabhawati Devi<sup>70</sup> (wife of the Sarvodaya leader, Jai Prakash Narayan) was arrested for participating in the freedom struggle of 1942 and she was lodged in the Bhagalpur Central Jail. When Kasturba (wife of Mahatma Gandhi) fell ill at the Aga Khan Palace at Poona, Prabhawati Devi was removed to the Aga Khan Palace on the request of Kasturba who wanted the former's presence at her bed side.<sup>71</sup>

Shri Dharam Mitra Verma, son of Tapasi Verma of Bhitbherwa, police station Gopalganj was convicted on the 1st September, 1942 for taking part in national movement. He was sentenced to one year rigorous imprisonment besides payment of a fine of Rs. one hundred in default thereof a further imprisonment of three months.<sup>72</sup>

Shri Radha Krishna Tiwary alias 'Tansen' son of Anirudha Tiwary of village Sohagpur, police station Mirganj was convicted for taking part in the freedom movement.<sup>73</sup>

Shri Pandey Gopinath Prasad, an Assistant Teacher of Eden High School, Hathua, Saran (a resident of village Jagarnatha, police station Mirganj, Saran) lent active support to the students of the school and the revolutionary leaders of the locality. He provided shelter to the absconding leaders and distributed money amongst the students who were taking part in the destructive activities. The then loyal Manager of the

Hathua Raj brought this matter to the notice of the local authorities on account of which Pandey Gopinath Prasad had to undergo great harassment at the hands of the local authorities.<sup>74</sup>

It has been mentioned in a letter of the Bihar Government that during the first half of October, 1942, "a combined police and military raided three villages of Siwan Police Station where absconders were reported to be hiding, a British Officer and a Sub-Inspector of Police were attacked by the villagers armed with swords. The military men fired in self defence wounding several persons, one of whom later on died."<sup>75</sup>

To create terror into the hearts of the people and show the might of the British Government, the Government of Bihar imposed collective fines in Saran district by notification dated 26th October 1942, as follows:

<i>Pallice Station</i>	<i>Amount of fine</i>
Sonepur	Rs. 25,000
Manjhi	Rs. 15,000
Dighwara	Rs. 10,000
Marhowrah	Rs. 10,000
Siwan	Rs. 10,000
Darauli	Rs. 5,000
Maharajganj	Rs. 20,000
Mairwa	Rs. 7,500
Basantpur	Rs. 3,000 <sup>76</sup>

At Kuchaikote, under Gopalganj Sub-division, in a meeting it was suggested not to accept currency notes or deposit coins in the treasury and to tamper with the Railway track. A Chaukidar was assaulted in Gopalganj Police Station by Congressmen who burnt his *pugri* and the letters that the Chaukidar was carrying.<sup>77</sup>

From the very beginning of the Quit India Movement several persons of Saran were detained under section 26(i) (b)<sup>78</sup> of the Defence of India Rules in connection with the Civil Disobedience

Movement from the month of August 1942 to November 1942.<sup>79</sup>

Shri Jaglal Chaudhary had received various concurrent sentences for his activities in Quit India Movement. The sentences were upheld by the reviewing Judge of the Patna High Court.<sup>80</sup>

According to a government publication, "in Bihar, Mr. Jaglal Chaudhary, who had been a Congress minister from 1937 to 1939, and who was one of Mr. Gandhi's trusted men, personally instigated the burning of a police station in the Saran district and during the attack urged the crowd to tie up the Sub-Inspector in a sack and throw him into the river. This same minister made plans to resist troops with spears, lighted torch and boiling..."<sup>81</sup>

In Saran for a brief, period, people's government functioned efficiently. At police stations Manjhi, Ekma, Dighwara, Darauli, Raghunathpur, Siswan, Sarsa, Baikunthpur and Garkha, the British administrative machinery had been completely paralysed. At Chapra, a board known as *swatantra mandal* was formed with jurisdiction over the whole of the Ekma *thana*, half of the Manjhi *thana* and some villages of Baniapur *thana*. This Board worked through village *panchayats*, on which rested the newly built administrative structure. Above the village *panchayats* was the *thana panchayats* and all these were under the control of the *mandal panchayat*. The President of this Mandal Panchayat was the supreme executive who guided the affairs of the *swatantra mandal*.<sup>82</sup>

Besides the *panchayats*, there were four departments under the supervision of this *swatantra mandal*. Those were : 1. Department of dislocators, i.e. those who caused dislocation and disruption. 2. Publicity Department 3. Village Defence Department 4. Volunteer's Department or *sevak dal*. The head of each department was called *adhyaksha*, whose orders had to be carried out by the *sevak dal*. The Publicity Department used to circulate revolutionary bulletins amongst the people and kept the members of the revolution burning in their hearts by holding meetings at different places and organising demonstrations. This department also managed delivery of

letters etc. The function of the village defence department was of great responsibility. It kept watch in night, checked theft and dacoity and produced, culprits before *Panchayats* for trial and punishment.<sup>83</sup>

The following figures will show the various victimizations carried out by the British Government during the Quit India Movement in Saran district :

1. Total number of arrests	...	1014
2. Number of sentences of whipping	...	109 <sup>84</sup>
3. Number of persons sentenced	...	816
4. Number of detainees	...	39
5. Number of police stations	...	27
6. Number of police stations attacked by the mob	...	27
7. Number of police stations taken under possession by the people	...	8
8. Places where firing resorted to people died thereon	...	7 <sup>85</sup>

The following is the official list of the persons who were killed in Saran district by the police and military police force during the Quit India Movement in 1942 :<sup>86</sup>

**Sonepur**

1. Maheshwar Singh s/o Gambhir Singh.
2. Chhatu Darji.
3. Jhagru Chamar.
4. Babu Ram Pandey.
5. Sita Ram Singh.

**Siwan**

6. Chhatu Giri, village Daudpur.

**Dighwara**

7. Narayan Singh s/o Basoo Singh of village Malkhachak.
8. Hari Nandan Prasad s/o Basantlal Sah of Dighwara Bazar.

9. Sita Ram Singh s/o Nathuni Singh of Hematpur.
10. Sohabir Ram s/o Jharookhi Sah of Mirpur Bhual.

**Marhowrah**

11. Ramjiwan Singh s/o Deosharan Singh, village Lerua.
12. Jai Mangal Mahto s/o Ramdin Mahto, village Amnaur Harnarain.

**Garkha**

13. Indradeo Chaudhary s/o Jaglal Chaudhary.

**Ziradei**

14. Bodhan Barai s/o Khelawan Barai of village Ziradei, police station Siwan.

**Thepahan**

15. Ram Sewan Rai s/o Bikram Rai of village Thepahan, police station Mairwa.

**Mairwa**

16. Ramdeni Singh s/o Sheoraj Kurmi of village Langarpura, police station Mairwa.

**Maharajganj**

17. Phulana Prasad Shrivastava s/o Bindhyachal Prasad of village Pachalakhi, police station Mairwa.
18. Deosaran Singh s/o Ramashish Singh of village Sihauta Bangara, police station Maharajganj.
19. Bhrigunath Thakur s/o Gokul Thakur of village Daraunda Pipra, police station Maharajganj.
20. Shubhlal Prasad s/o Sital Prasad of village Juafar, police station Basantpur.
21. Kishore Sonar s/o Dhondha Sonar of village Adhuni, police station Maharajganj.
22. Chandrama Prasad s/o Amar Mahto of village Mahuari, police station Maharajganj.

Thus the district of Saran played a prominent role in the national upsurge that took place in India in the month of August 1942. The people of the district were so well organised and acted firmly that they deserve our praise. The district of Saran was considered as a 'dangerous district' even by the Government of India. Dozens of police stations and Railway Stations were burnt, telegraph and telephone lines were cut and the government work was completely paralysed. The government was equally firm and it tried to suppress the movement with great ruthlessness. During this period of mob frenzy and government repression nearly two dozen of the patriots were killed and nearly one dozen of military and police men were also killed or injured. By October 1942, the British Government through the help of their army was able to reestablish its control over the district. However, the district of Saran remained in the vanguard in the great rebellion of 1942.

### Notes

1. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. II, p. 310.
2. Diwakar, R.R., *Bihar Through the Ages*, p. 667.
3. File No. 18/3/42, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
4. File No. 18/4/1942, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
5. File No. 18/7/1942, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. II, p. 340.
8. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. II, p. 343.

9. Papers relating to Freedom Movement, 1942, Bihar State Central Record Room.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. Majumdar, R.C., *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, p. 646.
13. *The Searchlight*, August 10, 1942.
14. *Ibid.*
15. The Bihar Gazette, Extraordinary, August 9, 1942.
16. *The Searchlight*, August 11 and 12, 1942.  
*The Indian Nation*, August 12, 1942.  
Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. III, p. 34.
17. *The Indian Nation*, August 13, 1942.
18. *The Searchlight*, August 14, 1942.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *The Indian Nation*, August 13, 1942.
21. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. III, pp. 41-42.
22. *Ibid.*
23. Chopra, P.N., Chief Editor, *Who is Who of Indian Martyrs*, Vol. I, 1969, Government of India, pp. 288 and 341.  
Prasad, Rajendra, *Atmakatha*, p. 624.  
Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. III, pp. 41-42.
24. This information was furnished to me by Radha Krishna Sharma, at present Head of History Department, Rajendra College, Chapra, who removed Ramyash Sinha to Patna Hospital. Shri Sharma a resident of village Pithauri P.S. Baniapore was then a 6th year (History) Student in Patna College. He had also joined the procession along with Ramyash Sinha.
25. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. III, p. 49.
26. This information was furnished to me by Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, ex-Chief Minister of Bihar when I interviewed him on the 12th June, 1973.
27. *The Searchlight*, August 15, 1942.
28. Narayan, Baldeo, *August Kranti* (1947), Bihar Vidyapeeth, Patna, Introduction written by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, pp. 75-76.  
Dutta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. III, p. 49.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

30. File No. 69, 'Papers containing the list of persons killed during August Movement', Bihar State Central Record Room.  
Narayan, Baldeo, *August Kranti*, pp. 75-76.
31. Narayan, Baldeo, *August Kranti*, pp. 76, 102.
32. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. III, p. 59.
33. Narayan, Baldeo, *August Kranti*, p. 169.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 94-95.
35. *The Searchlight*, August 16, 1942.
36. File No. 49, 'Papers relating to freedom movement', extract from the report of D.I.G., Police, Muzaffarpur letter (D.O.No. 686/C) dated 23rd October, 1942, Bihar State Central Record Room.
37. Narayan, Baldeo, *August Kranti*, pp. 96-97.
38. File No. 49, 'Papers relating to freedom movement', extract from the report of D.I.G., Police, Muzaffarpur letter (D.O.No. 686/C) dated 23rd October, 1942, Bihar State Central Record Room.
39. *Ibid.*
40. Narayan, Baldeo, *August Kranti*, pp. 97 and 169.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
42. *Ibid.*
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 100 and 103.
44. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. III, p. 60.
45. Phulena Prasad Shrivastava was the son of Bindhyachal Prasad of village Pachalakhi, police station Majriwa but he was living in his *Sasural* at Balbangara, police station Maharajganj.
46. File No. 49, 'Papers relating to Freedom Movement', Bihar State Central Record Room.  
Chopra, P.N. *Who is Who of Indian Martyrs* (Government of India), Vol. I, pp. 88, 202, 345.  
Narayan, Baldeo, *August Kranti*, pp. 101, 179 and 180.
47. Narayan, Baldeo, *August Kranti* p. 181.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 304.
49. This information was given to me by Rajbanshi Singh.
50. *Ibid.*
51. Narayan, Baldeo, *August Kranti*, p. 303
52. *Ibid.*, pp. 179 and 182.
53. Lady members of Sukhdeo Narayan Mehta's family and others.
54. Mansergh, Nicholas. *Transfer of Power*, Vol. II, p. 794.  
Narayan, Baldeo, *August Kranti*, pp. 172, 295-297.



55. Narayan, Baldeo, *August Kranti*, pp. 178 and 302.
56. File No. 3/31/42, K. W. Home (Political), Department National Archives of India, New Delhi.
57. *The Indian Nation*, December 8, 1944. (Dak Edition)
58. Narayan, Baldeo, *August Kranti*, p. 182.
59. This information was given to me by Jhulan Singh of village Hajia-pore, police station Gopalganj on my personal interview with him.
60. Narayan, Baldeo, *August Kranti*, pp. 183 and 304.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 294.
63. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. III, p. 105.
64. Nicholas, Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power, 1942-47*, Vol. II, p. 789.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 791.
66. Narayan, Baldeo, *August Kranti*, pp. 303-304.
67. Information based on the interview with Sheopujan Chaudhary on 29.8.1971.
68. Narayan, Baldeo, *August Kranti*, p. 304.
69. File No. 69, papers containing the list of persons killed during August Movement, 1942, Bihar State Central Record Room.
70. She was the daughter of Braj Kishore Prasad of Siri Nagar, Siwan.
71. *The Indian Nation*, April 16, 1973.
72. This information was supplied to me by Dharma Mitra Verma.
73. This information was supplied to me by Radha Krishna Tiwary.
74. Based on the Annual Report of the Eden High School, Hathua, 1972, presented under the presidentship of 'Padmashri' Dr. Shyam Nandan Kishore, Head of the Hindi Department, Bihar University, Muzaffarpur on the 12th February 1972.
75. File No. 18/10/1942, Home (Political) Deptt., National Archives of India.
76. Bihar Gazette, Extraordinary Issue, 17th October 1942.
77. Report on the events in Bihar during the second half of November, 1942, available in the National Archives of India, New Delhi.
78. Appendix IV.
79. Appendix V.
80. Report on the events in Bihar during the first half of December, 1942, available in the National Archives of India, New Delhi.

81. 'Congress Responsibility for the disturbances 1942-43', published by the Government of India, Home (Political) Department, 1943, p. 31.
82. Narayan, Baldeo, *August Kranti*, pp. 247-248.
83. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. III, pp. 246-247.
84. *Ibid.*.
85. Dutta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. III, p. 232.
86. Narayan, Baldeo, *August Kranti*, p. 10.
87. File No. 69, papers containing the list of persons killed during August Movement, 1942, Bihar State Central Record Room.

## **VII**

### **SARAN AND THE FINAL PHASE OF INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT (1943 TO 1947)**

Though the national uprising of Indian people in August 1942, was ruthlessly crushed by the British Government with the help of gun and bayonet, still the movement did not die out completely, rather it became underground. The sentiment of the Indian people was very much wounded on account of extreme repressive policy adopted by the British Government in India. However, the people of the district of Saran continued their agitation in a subdued way.

The Congress workers and absconders of Saran district continued to work secretly against the British Government in the interior places during the first half of January 1943. However, the 'Independence Day' was celebrated as usual on the 26th January 1943<sup>1</sup> and no untoward events took place on that day.<sup>2</sup>

In the meantime the Indian people were shocked to learn that Mahatma Gandhi while under detention at the Aga Khan Palace in Poona had resorted to fast "according to capacity" from February 10, 1943. It was of twenty-one day's duration.<sup>3</sup> The Bihar Government was fully conscious of the repercussions at might arise due to twenty-one days fast of the Mahatma.

Therefore, it took the necessary precautions. On the day Mahatma. Gandhi started his fast, the Government of Bihar, in order to meet any contingency, issued the following instructions to the authorities concerned :

“Today Gandhi has commenced a fast which may last 21 days unless he gives it up earlier, thinking it to be beyond his capacity. The critical period of the fast is likely to start about the fifth day and it is most essential for all the Magistrates and Police Officers to be on the look out for troubles which are likely to take any one or more of the following forms :

“(1) Processions, (2) meetings, (3) attacks on *kacherries*, *thanas* and individual government officer and their houses and particularly on isolated Europeans, (4) cutting of communications, (5) sympathetic fasts in jails and in public, (6) *hartals*, (7) strikes in public utility services or in war industries, (8) educational institutions. You should not hesitate to use full powers to prevent and to stop these and any other forms of troubles. If at any time it is necessary to use force, it must be used effectively. Full but discreet use should be made of Defence of India Rules 129 and 132 to detain any person likely to create trouble whether they belong to the Congress or other political parties. Mobile patrols should be arranged to visit and collect information from outlying police stations. In case the usual communications break down, alternative means of sending and receiving messages to and from subordinate offices should be arranged now. Co-operation of local educational authorities and officers of other government departments should be insisted on. There may be attempts at jail-breaking which must be guarded against. Orders have been issued to the Inspector-General of Police to send detachments of armed police to the central jails. Non-official Europeans in outlying stations should be advised by personal letters to be sent by messengers which should be duly acknowledged that the critical period may begin from the 15th of this month and that they must come into a rallying post or other centre to be specified in the letter. Otherwise protection cannot be guaranteed. Every endeavour must be made to protect the sugar factories.”

“News to be published in the press regarding the progress of the fast and the stage of Gandhi’s health will be confined to (1) official communiques issued by Government and (2) statements issued with the approval of Government by persons who are permitted to visit him while he is fasting. Inflammatory comments, cartoons, flaring headlines, etc., will not be allowed. Objection will not be taken to reasonable editorial comments, but you should invite local papers to submit such a comment to you for pre-censorship and should warn editors that any transgression of limits indicated above will be met by immediate action against the offending paper. Power to impose censorship of Press under Defence of India Rules 41 (i) has been delegated to District Magistrate by notification no. 5894 C of the 27th December 1941 for use in emergency. But it is desired that these powers should not be used unless individual editor declines to accept the restrictions. Special watches should be kept for unauthorised messages purporting to emanate indirectly from Gandhi or from Congress Committees and such messages should be stopped by using full powers in regard to telegrams and postal communications. Circulations of news broadcast of Axis Radio must also be watched”.

“If Gandhi calls off the fast you will be informed by wire containing the signal, ‘Bus’. If he dies during fast you will receive wire containing the single word ‘Ekdam’. District Officers will inform Government daily by wire of situation in the district for preceding 24 hours. The wire should be addressed to ‘Marco’ Patna. They may be enclaire unless District Magistrate thinks it advisable to send them in cipher”.<sup>4</sup>

The twenty-one day fast of Mahatma Gandhi cast a gloom on the people of Saran. The prisoners of Chapra Jail went on sympathetic fast.<sup>5</sup> Prayers and meetings were held throughout the district for the successful termination of the fast. The whole country including the district of Saran heaved a sigh of great relief when the Mahatma broke his fast on the 2nd March 1943.<sup>6</sup>

After the termination of Mahatma Gandhi’s fast the underground work against the government continued unabated. During the first half of March 1943, a Congress worker, who

was circulating leaflets and making efforts to obtain a duplicator, was arrested in Saran, and copies of different leaflets were recovered from his possession.<sup>7</sup>

A programme for observing the 'National Week' from the 6th to 13th April 1943, was issued by the All India Congress Committee which includes holding meetings and taking out processions without licence, flag hoisting ceremonies, the observance of Labour day, Quit India day, Fast day, Student's day, and finally Martyr's day, in which speeches were to be made describing the so-called 'British atrocities'.<sup>8</sup> The Congress workers of Saran scrupulously followed the programme as circulated.

In spite of the government's repressive policy the revolutionaries were quite active in the district of Saran. On the 29th April 1943, one countrymade crude bomb with zinc cover was thrown at the residence of Khan Saheb Anwar Ali, Deputy Superintendent of Chapra Jail. Consequently the jail Verandah's floor was damaged and the door's pans were broken.<sup>9</sup>

While the underground activities against the government were carried on by the Indian revolutionaries, there occurred an incident which put the Bihar Government to great embarrassment and that was the escape of Jai Prakash Narain,<sup>10</sup> the Socialist leader, along with his five comrades, from Hazaribagh Central Jail. On the 9th November 1942 (i. e. on Deepawali Day) Jai Prakash Narain with five political prisoners escaped from the Hazaribagh Central Jail. According to government report "the escape was facilitated by laxity of supervision in the jail, but the possibility of help from the outside is not excluded".<sup>11</sup> After his escape from the jail he secretly visited different parts of India with a view to organising a Central Action Committee. But the policy and programme that were adopted by him were radically different from those of Mahatma Gandhi.<sup>12</sup>

After his escape, Jai Prakash Narain secretly roamed about in the different provinces of the country issuing directives to his partymen regarding the policies to be followed.<sup>13</sup> The government also announced substantial rewards for any information which might lead to the arrest of Jai Prakash Narain and others viz., for Jai Prakash Narain Rs.-5000/-, for Yogendra

Shukul Rs. 5000/-, for Ramanandan Mishra Rs. 5000/-, for Suraj Narain Singh Rs. 2000/-, for Gulali Rs. 2000/- and for Shaligram Singh Rs. 2000/-.<sup>14</sup>

Several absconders from Bihar went to the Nepal 'Terai'. It was a desolate and neglected place at that time. Hence, arms and ammunitions, spears and other weapons could be easily collected and deposited there.<sup>15</sup> With the object of training such bands of workers, Jai Prakash Narain proceeded to Nepal 'Terai'. Here he organised the *azad dasta* or guerrilla bands for serving the whole country. In order to terrorise British imperialists, the *azad dasta* carried its works of dislocating and paralyzing the alien administration.<sup>16</sup> But the British Government was already alert and took necessary steps to suppress the revolutionary activities in the 'Terai'. In the month of May, 1943, Jai Prakash Narain with some others were arrested and put in the Hanuman Nagar Jail in Nepal.<sup>17</sup>

#### **Hanuman Nagar Police Station (Nepal) Raided**

On the 22nd of May 1943, a band of revolutionaries, numbering fifty, according to government report, raided the jail and rescued Jai Prakash Narain and a few others. In this raid forty or fifty shots were fired by the revolutionary raiders.<sup>18</sup> Consequently one of the Nepalese guards was killed and several others injured.<sup>19</sup>

The district of Saran can be proud of the fact that some members of the revolutionary parties working in the Nepal 'Terai' belonged to it e.g., Jang Bahadur Singh, son of late Raksha Rai, village Thepahan, police station Mairwa, Rama Nand Yadava, son of late Anant Yadava, village Mubarakpur, police station Manjhi, Suraj Singh of Marhowrah, district Saran and a few others.<sup>20</sup>

After the raid of Hanuman Nagar police station, the revolutionaries went underground. On the 23rd June 1943, Jang Bahadur Singh of village Thepahan, police station Mairwa, convened a meeting at village Kartalpur near Dighwa-Dubauli Railway Station (N.E. Railway) in Saran district to discuss the future programme of the party. Several persons of Saran dis-

strict attended the meeting which included Rambali Singh of village Tilmapore, police station Mairwa, Rambachan Dubey of village Harinathpur, police station Raghunathpur, Rama Nand Yadava of village Mubarakpur, police station Manjhi and several others. However, the Police got the scent of the meeting and made a sudden raid which resulted in the arrest of twenty-five persons on the spot including Jang Bahadur Singh, who was also the Secretary of Mairwa Thana Congress Socialist Party.<sup>21</sup>

During the second half of June 1943, a printed leaflet entitled 'oath of allegiance' was found in Siwan which was issued from the office of the Congress Socialist Party's 'Azad Dasta', and probably it was brought from Nepal Training Camp of the *Azad Dasta*.<sup>22</sup>

The workers of the *Kisan Sabha* were also active in Saran district during this period. They secretly encouraged the movement. On the 12th 13th of June 1943, the 10th Bihar Provincial Kisan Conference was held at Sonepur under the presidentship of Swami Sahjanand Saraswati. Several resolutions were adopted which included a protest against the imposition of tax on tobacco, advice to Kisans not to sell their cattle for 'military food', advice to labour to demand increase in their wages and payment of the same in kind, a protest against the removal of the embargo on the export of foodgrains and opposition to the formation of coalition ministry. The government was held responsible for the August disturbances and the release of Congress leaders was urged.<sup>23</sup>

Secret preparations were made to celebrate the anniversary of the great August Revolution in a befitting manner but the government got the scent of it in July 1943, and it asked its officers in the districts to be on the watch and to deal with the situation firmly.<sup>24</sup>

On the 1st August 1943, the government informed the District officers to make necessary arrangement for posting of the armed forces to the different districts, which was "to move about in the interior." This was intended to "produce an impression on the public mind" that there were "a large



number of armed forces in the area to deal with any situation". The Education Department ordered their officers that in case any demonstration or *hartal* was attempted, they "should not hesitate to use the ample powers" which they then possessed "to deal with the offence." A press conference was held on the 7th August 1943 in which the representatives of the local press were cautioned by the government against the publication of any "sensational news items" relating to what might happen on the 9th August or on the subsequent days.<sup>25</sup>

In spite of government's precautions to crush the demonstrations in connection with the celebration of August anniversary, the nationalists observed the 'August Celebration' with great enthusiasm. They took out processions, hoisted national flags and observed *hartals* throughout the province including the district of Saran.<sup>26</sup> At Chapra a student of Rajendra College was arrested which greatly excited the students. At Siwan, there was an explosion near the police station building which forced the government to impose curfew order for four days.<sup>27</sup>

During the first half of October 1943, several absconders were arrested which included Birendra Prasad Azad, an ex-student of Rajendra College, Chapra. He admitted that he had actively resorted to the disruption of communications during the last August (1942) rebellion and he was in touch with Jai Prakash Narain in Nepal.<sup>28</sup>

It is evident from the government report that during the second half of October 1943, one Gauri Mian of Saran, a Congress Muslim, who had taken a leading part in the August Movement of 1942, was arrested and a few sets of *khaki* uniforms were recovered from his house. He admitted that he had worked with Jai Prakash Narain and others in the Nepal *terai*.<sup>29</sup>

On the 5th November 1943, S. K. Das, Secretary, Judicial Department, Government of Bihar, informed the District Magistrate of Saran in his letter  $\frac{\text{(No. 5374—J)}}{\text{(JL 183/42/X)}}$  that the pro-

vincial government was pleased to order the following twenty security prisoners of Saran to be placed in Division III :

- 1. Parmatma Singh
2. Jagadish Narain
3. Jang Bahadur Singh or Jangi Singh
4. Suraj Singh
5. Phulena Tiwary
6. Ramchandra Bihari
7. Sudhist Narain Singh
8. Bishwanath Sharma
9. Rambahadur Missir
10. Madhusudan Singh
11. Rambali Singh
12. Bholanath Missir
13. Benarash Rai
14. Sheo Prasad Singh
15. Ramdharichan Raut
16. Sheobachan Koeri
17. Ram Nath Dubey
18. Sarda Sharan Singh
19. Baleshwar Singh
20. Ramjas Ahir.<sup>30</sup>

Dr. Rajendra Prasad's 59th birthday was celebrated with great enthusiasm on December 3, 1943, at several places in the province of Bihar. One of the largest being at Chapra. The speakers at all the meetings dealt with Dr. Prasad's life and his work and demanded his release so that he might be helpful in solving the political impasse and also the food problem.<sup>31</sup>

As regards the general activities of the Congress in Bihar in 1944-45, there was a renewal of efforts for constructive and social works. The 'National Week' was celebrated in Saran just as in the previous year. Many Congress workers took active parts in collections for 'Kasturba Fund' and sale of *khadi*. They were also engaged in anti-Savings Drive. The serious illness of Mahatma Gandhi in April 1944, caused immense anxiety amongst the people of this province including the district of Saran. Though the government asked the local press "to exer-

cise restraint in dealing with the subject", the news about it spread rapidly. When Mahatma Gandhi's condition deteriorated in the end of April, in order to avoid any possible repercussions in Bihar, the local government took several precautionary measures, and sent instructions to all District Officers to deal with any eventuality.<sup>32</sup>

However, Mahatma Gandhi was released on the 16th May 1944 and this gave a sense of relief to all who were passing their days in intense anxiety.<sup>33</sup>

In spite of all precautionary measures on the part of the provincial government, the nationalists of Saran district were active in their anti-government activities. It is evident from the Bihar Government report that a number of important arrests were made during the first half of May 1944, "including Shri Ganesh Bhagat, who was arrested in the house of a detinue in the Saran district". It was also reported that in the same district a number of objectionable leaflets were found along with a large stores of miscellaneous explosives.<sup>34</sup>

On the 13th August 1944, a meeting of all party leaders was held at the residence of Anugrah Narain Sinha at Patna in which a resolution was passed demanding the immediate release of Rajendra Prasad in view of the spread of epidemics in north Bihar. It was expected that his release would facilitate the organisation of effective relief measures in the affected areas. Shrikrishna Sinha, who presided over the meeting, requested the government to release Rajendra Prasad, who by the virtue of the position which he held in the country, would be able to collect the money that was necessary for the purpose of giving relief to the affected persons of north Bihar.<sup>35</sup>

On the 23rd November 1944, the Sub-Inspector of Police, Raghunathpur police station (Saran), searched the house of Chhathu Lohar of village Harnathpore and recovered the following subversive literatures :

1. *Bharat Men Angrezi Raj*
2. *The All India Congress Socialist Party* in 2 Volumes.
3. *Jhopari Ka Rudan*

Two persons, Chchathu Lohar and Chedi Lohar were arrested as members of the Congress Socialist Party group.<sup>36</sup>

On the 2nd December 1944, an inter-school competition on the life and work of Rajendra Prasad was held on the occasion of diamond jubilee of his birth<sup>37</sup> in the Rajput School, Chapra.<sup>38</sup>

On the 3rd December 1944, Sampurnanand (the then ex-Education Minister of U.P.) who presided the Diamond Jubilee Celebration of Rajendra Prasad at Chapra said that 'Deshratna' Rajendra Prasad was more than an individual, he was an institution. He was the very embodiment of the real culture and heritage of Bihar. He was in fact the very soul of Bihar.<sup>39</sup>

The people of Saran were also active in constructive work. On the 10th December 1944, under the presidentship of Tara Rani Shrivastava,<sup>40</sup> a meeting was held at Siwan. The meeting expressed its implicit faith in the constructive programme of Mahatma Gandhi and formed a Sub-Divisional Constructive Workers' Council and 5 different Sub-committees with a view to furthering constructive work as outlined by Mahatma Gandhi in the Siwan Sub-division of Saran district.<sup>41</sup>

The National Movement of India took a new turn when on the 14th June 1945, the Viceroy announced his decision that orders had been passed for the release of the members of the Congress Working Committee.<sup>42</sup> Rajendra Prasad was released in the early morning of the 15th June. On the same day the ban on the Congress Working Committee was also withdrawn and the display of the Congress flag in public was allowed.<sup>43</sup>

The Bihar Provincial Congress Committee decided to celebrate the 9th August 1945, in the following manner :

1. Private meetings of Congress workers at 6 p.m. in which the All India Congress Committee Resolution of August 1942, will be read out and reiterated. If the local workers so choose, they may hold a public meeting with the permission of the authorities instead of a private meeting.

2. Peaceful strikes in schools, colleges and labour concerns, i.e. factories.

The above is rather different from the general and more public instructions being issued which are as follows :

- (a) *Prabhat Pheries* (early morning processions).
- (b) Flag hoisting and salutation ceremonies.
- (c) Reading of 'Quit India' resolution by every individual.
- (d) Spinning demonstrations.
- (e) *Khadi* sale.
- (f) Furthering the constructive programme.
- (g) Collection of funds towards prisoners' Relief and Defence Committee and Kasturba Fund.
- (h) Prayers for peace to all souls of martyrs.

This programme will be followed from the 9th to the 15th August 1945.<sup>44</sup>

The Bihar Government decided not to allow public meetings for the purpose of reading the resolution or of eulogising the martyr's who had lost their lives in the Movement of 1942. However, the celebrations were held peacefully throughout the province including the district of Saran.<sup>45</sup>

Shri Rajendra Prasad issued an appeal to his countrymen for liberal donation so that with the amount so collected necessary relief would be given to the families of those persons who had suffered in the political Movement in 1942 and also to meet the expenses incurred in connection with contesting the cases of those persons who were in prison and were unable to meet their own expenses over the cases pending in the court on account of their poverty.<sup>46</sup>

#### **Broadcast of Lord Wavell and the British Prime Minister, 19th September, 1945**

On the 19th September 1945, the British Prime Minister Mr. Attlee, and Lord Wavell, the Viceroy of India made simultaneous announcements regarding steps to be taken by them for the solution of the Indian constitutional problem. Expressing the hope that "ministerial responsibility will be accepted by political leaders in all provinces" after elections to Central and Provincial Legislatures which were to be held during the winter

season of 1945-46, Lord Wavell announced the "intention of His Majesty's Government to convene as soon as possible a Constitution making body" for which he had been authorised to hold "preparatory discussions with elected representatives in British India and with Indian States", immediately after the elections. He further observed that "His Majesty's Government are proceeding to the consideration of the content of the treaty which will require to be concluded between Great Britain and India" and that "as soon as the result of the elections are published, to take step to bring into being an Executive Council which will have the support of the main Indian parties"<sup>47</sup> The announcement of Lord Wavell had its effects on the political movement in the district of Saran. The people of the district began to feel that political impasse would come to an end and now the political movement would bear some concrete fruits.<sup>48</sup>

In September 1945, the Working Committee of the All India Congress Committee met at Bombay and declared the proposals of the British Government "inadequate and vague".<sup>49</sup> However, the Indian National Congress decided to contest the ensuing elections. Accordingly an Assembly Election Sub-Committee was constituted to organise the elections. The committee consisted of :

1. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
2. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
3. Rajendra Prasad
4. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant
5. Asaf Ali
6. Pattabhi Sitaramayya
7. Shankarrao Deo.

Soon an Election Manifesto was drawn up for the Centre and Provinces.<sup>50</sup>

Towards the end of September 1945, Rajendra Prasad issued a statement to the press in which he criticised the orders of the Provincial Government regarding the revision of the electoral rolls and said that the Bihar Government should at least take their clue from the Bombay Government which has ordered new electoral rolls to be prepared *suo moto*. He also

urged that the ban on individuals and societies should be removed. He further complained that over 1000 Congressmen of Bihar were behind the prison bars as detenues or political convicts.<sup>51</sup>

In another speech at Patna, Rajendra Prasad stated that "what people had done in 1942 is the brightest chapter in India's history and coming generation will read it with feelings of pride". He further said that "we kept the people ready for action. After the arrest of the leaders people did what they liked in the absence of any complete programme before them". He again said that "the August Resolution cannot be altered nor can even a comma of it be omitted till complete independence has been achieved".<sup>52</sup>

These statements of Rajendra Prasad had their impact in moulding the attitude of the people of Saran. So far they were feeling depressed on account of the repressive attitude of the Bihar Government but the bold statements of Rajendra Prasad helped them in shaking off their feelings of depression and taking to new attitude towards the national movement.

Shri Rajendra Prasad visited his home district, Saran, on election tours. Attendance in these meetings were beyond anybody's expectations. The popularity of Sri Prasad was acknowledged even by the Bihar Government as Government reported : "there is no doubt that he (Dr. Rajendra Prasad) is a very respected and popular figure in Bihar". The points of his speeches were :

1. That Congress should be strengthened by enlisting members in large numbers.
2. That subscriptions should be given to the political sufferers' fund, and
3. that Congress should be supported at the ensuing election.<sup>53</sup>

Saran also did not lag behind in celebrating 'Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Day' and 'Jai Prakash Narain Day'. On the 23rd January 1946, the Chapra students celebrated the birthday of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose by taking out a procession and holding a public meeting in the evening. In the

morning *prabhat pheries* were held in Chapra town in which the usual slogans were shouted. The birth anniversary of Subhash Chandra Bose was also celebrated at Siwan.<sup>54</sup>

• On the 12th February 1946, the Patna students observed 'Jai Parkash Day'. Shops of the city were decorated with national flags. Students moved about with small photographs of Jai Prakash Narain. Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, President of Saran District Congress Committee, addressed the audience at Bankipore Maidan (Patna) and said that Jai Prakash might be a rebel in the eyes of the British Government, but to Indians he was as great as Washington was to the Americans and Lenin to the Russians.<sup>55</sup> His speech produced tremendous effect upon the audience.

The election campaign was in full swing since the polling day of the election was drawing nearer. On the 12th February 1946, Anugrah Narain Sinha<sup>56</sup> visited Kateyan and Kuchaikote *thanas* of Saran district and explained the significance of the Congress manifesto issued on the eve of election. In the evening he addressed a big meeting at Gopalganj (Saran) under the presidentship of Mahamaya Prasad Sinha. Anugrah Narain Sinha in his speech dwelt on the question of Hindu-Muslims unity. In course of his speech he said that it was their disunity and foolishness that the British rule was based and not upon sword and spear. He added that the Bengal famine as well as the present day troubles were all due to Government's inefficiency. He appealed to the voters to vote for the Congress candidate and further requested the Muslims to vote for the Momins.<sup>57</sup>

Due to untiring efforts of Rajendra Prasad, the Congress candidates returned with overwhelming majority in the district of Saran. The following Congress candidates were returned uncontested from Saran district.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Constituency</i>
1. Prabhunath Singh	East Gopalganj cum Masarakh Marhowrah.
2. Girish Tiwary	Chapra.



- |    |                          |                                 |
|----|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 3. | Jhulan Singh             | North-East Siwan.               |
| 4. | Ram Binod Singh          | Saran.                          |
| 5. | Mahamaya Prasad<br>Sinha | South-West Siwan. <sup>58</sup> |

The following were elected from Saran district.<sup>59</sup>  
*West Gopalganj* (two seats)

1. Phulan Prasad Verma—Congress.
2. Ram Basawan Ram (Congress-Special seat.)

### Muslim seats

Saran Sadar—M. Noor Hassan Mian (Muslim League).  
 Siwan —Maulvi Md. Kasim Hasan (Muslim League).

Since the Congress Party won the majority of seats in the Provincial Legislature, the leader of the party was asked to form government in the province of Bihar. Thus, on the 2nd April 1946, at 11 a.m. the popular Congress Ministry was sworn in at the Government House. The oath of office was administered to Shrikrishna Sinha, Anugrah Narain Sinha and Syed Mahmood by the then Governor. Immediately after taking over the charge of the administration, Shrikrishna Sinha, who was incharge of law and order, passed orders for the forthwith release of Jaglal Chaudhary and other political prisoners.<sup>61</sup>

Dramatic scenes were witnessed at the Patna District Jail on the 2nd April 1946, when the Chief Minister along with the Finance and Education Ministers arrived at 4 p.m. and got the jail gate opened in order to secure release of Jaglal Chaudhary, a brave son of Saran, who was accorded a thundering ovation by the huge crowd assembled at the gate to welcome Sri Chaudhary.<sup>62</sup>

On the 3rd April, 1946, Jaglal Chaudhary was sworn in as the fourth Minister in Bihar Congress Cabinet at 2.30 p.m.<sup>63</sup>

Within a few days five more members including one member of the Momin community were included in the Council of Ministers. The additional members took the oaths of office and secrecy on the 6th April 1946. They were Ram Charitra

Singh, Acharya Badrinath Verma, Krishna Ballabh Sahay, Binoda Nand Jha and Abdul Qaiyum Ansari.<sup>64</sup> The assumption of office by the Ministers was warmly welcomed by the people of Saran district.

In the meantime the ban on the Congress Socialist Party was lifted on the 11th April 1946. Jai Prakash Narain along with Ram Manohar Lohia were released from Agra Jail. Prabhawati Devi, wife of Jai Prakash Narain, was also present at the gate of Agra Jail to receive her husband. After release from the jail, Jai Prakash Narain and Ram Manohar Lohia left for Delhi along with Prabhawati Devi to meet Mahatma Gandhi.<sup>65</sup> After they were released the Independent Labour Party of London sent the following telegram to Jai Prakash Narain and Ram Manohar Lohia : "The Independent Labour Party welcome you to freedom and pays tribute to your courageous record."<sup>66</sup>

On October 15, 1946, Braj Kishore Prasad of village Shri Nagar, police station Siwan, district Saran, the veteran Congress leader and one of the sponsors of Mahatma Gandhi's Champaran Movement passed away at 1 p.m. at his residence Laheriasarai (Darbhanga). On hearing his death Mahatma Gandhi paid a glowing tributes to Braj Kishore Prasad, viz "He was a man of his word", said Gandhiji, "honest and true servant, not only of Bihar but of the whole of India. He had been a brilliant star in the firmament of Bihar and his memory would always be cherished."<sup>66</sup>

### **Communal Frenzy in East Bengal and its repercussions on Saran**

The massacres of the Hindus in East Bengal produced violent reactions amongst the people in the district of Saran. On the 24th October 1946, Chapra observed complete *hartal* as a protest against East Bengal atrocities. On the same day the communal riot suddenly flared up in Karimchowk (Chapra) at 3.30 p.m. As a result of this four persons were killed.<sup>68</sup> The communal riot became extremely serious in Saran and by the 26th of October 1946, about 20 persons were killed and several injured. Some houses were set on fire. To control the situation the police also opened fire as a result of which

two persons were killed and some were wounded. Curfew was imposed on Chapra from 5.30 p.m. to 5.30 a.m. and section 144 Cr.P.C. was promulgated banning carrying of arms and assembly of four or more persons.<sup>69</sup>

From Chapra town the communal trouble spread to the rural areas. In Sadar Sub-Division of Chapra 15 persons were killed in village Khodaibagh and seven were killed in Rashulpur. There was also trouble in village Jalalpur<sup>70</sup> where 30 houses including a government grain shop were set on fire. As a result of the communal frenzy ten dead bodies were found there.<sup>71</sup>

On the 27th October 1946, a large number of Muslim crowd assembled in a lane in Mohallah Naibazar (Chapra) and used fire arms twice. Though none was injured but the wall on the *varandah* of the T.B. Ward of the hospital was damaged. Immediately after it the armed police arrived and brought the situation under control.<sup>72</sup>

The total number of people killed due to the communal riots till the 27th October 1946, was 55, while the number of persons injured was 65, according to the Sadar Hospital records. The total number of persons arrested for violating curfew order and Section 144 was 70.<sup>73</sup>

Another serious situation was averted in Dhubaul Bazar, police station Baniapore, but due to timely intervention of Pandit Girish Tiwary, M.L.A., nothing serious happened. At village Isapur in Masarkh police station, one Chaukidar was killed while he was resisting a mob which was looting the properties of a villager.<sup>74</sup>

On the 29th October, 1946, Shrikrishna Sinha, the Chief Minister of Bihar and Syed Mahmood, Minister of Development, visited the affected area in Chapra town and affected villages : Khodaibagh, Olhanpur, Nagra, Katedar and Paigambarpore. The Chief Minister assured the relations of the riot victims that government would give them all possible relief including cloth and food. He granted Rs.2500/- from his discretionary fund to some women of the minority community. He also asked the District Magistrate of Saran for arranging

cloth, blankets and food to refugees of Paigambarpore within six hours.<sup>75</sup>

In the morning of the 30th October 1946, a meeting of the Congress workers and leaders of the Saran district was held to review the then prevailing communal situation. As a result of the deliberations workers were deputed to various *thanas* when the situation was tense. The Congress Riot Relief Committee was established and its office was opened in the Chapra Dak Bungalow.<sup>76</sup>

In this atmosphere, all the educational institutions of Chapra including the Rajendra College were closed by the order of the District Magistrate of Saran from the 30th October to 11th November, 1946.<sup>77</sup>

On the 31st October, 1946, the Muslim villagers of village Sariyan, Baniapore, Piaripore, Harpur Karah and Sengarpati of Saran district sent the following wire to the Editor, *Searchlight* :

“Hindus are protecting us with their lives. No apprehension. Jinnah’s leadership responsible for cause of trouble. We dissociate from him.”<sup>78</sup>

At Hathua on the 27th October 1946, at the instance of Khan Saheb Abdus Samad, Maulvi Ahad Khan and other gentlemen of Hathua, a largely attended peace meeting was held in the Kutchery Maidan with K.K. Sen Gupta, Head Master, Eden School, Hathua in the chair. A resolution was passed to the effect that the then present cloth committees in the villages should work for bringing peace and harmony in their respective villages and should forthwith report to the police if there was any communal tension.<sup>79</sup>

Jaglal Chaudhary of Garkha (Saran) who was a Minister of Bihar, contested from East-Central-Shahabad General Constituency bye-election, which took place on the 29th and 30th October 1946 in which he was declared elected by a thumping majority.<sup>80</sup>

On December 7, 1946, Jai Prakash Narain addressed a meeting at Chapra under the auspices of Saran District Congress

Committee. Mahamaya Prasad Sinha presided. Prominent amongst those present were Jaglal Chaudhary, Pandit Girish Tiwary, Prabhunath Singh, Laxmi Narain Singh and others. Jai Prakash Narain in his speech exhorted the people to prepare for the next and final step towards the seizure of power from British Government in India. He said that nothing would come out of the London talk and that in the ultimate resort they would have to fight the British and snatch power from their unwilling hands. He concluded that communal strife would only strengthen the British and their agents, the Muslim Leagues who were bent upon disrupting the country and thus retard the country's progress and its march to freedom.<sup>81</sup>

### **Meetings of the Indian Constituent Assembly**

The opening session of the Indian Constituent Assembly met at Delhi on the 9th December, 1946, under the presidency of Sachchidanand Sinha, an Indian leader of repute and a great son of Bihar. The elected Muslim League members absented themselves from the meeting though representatives of other communities took part in its deliberations.<sup>82</sup>

On December 11, 1946. Rajendra Prasad assumed the chair. He was elected as the permanent President of the Constituent Assembly.<sup>83</sup> Naturally this produced feelings of pride and profound satisfaction amongst the people of the district of Saran since Rajendra Prasad belonged to the soil of this district.

### **Mr. Attlee's Momentous Declaration of the 20th February, 1947**

On the 20th February, 1947, Mr. Attlee made the momentous declaration that it was the British Government's "definite intention to take necessary steps to effect the transfer of power to responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948". Lord Mountbatten came to India as successor to Lord Wavell in March 1947 and he accelerated India's march to a new status. In his plan of 3rd June, 1947, he outlined the procedure for transfer of power into Indian hands. The plan had no doubt certain defects, the most serious of these being the proposed partition of India. While expressing regret that

the plan of June 3 1947, was "likely to lead to the secession of certain parts of the country from India", the All India Congress Committee accepted these out of very practical considerations in view of the distressing political conditions in the country.<sup>84</sup>

The All India Congress Committee met at Delhi on the 14th and 15th June, 1947, and resolved that "the committee welcomes the decision of the British Government to transfer power completely to the Indian people by next August ..."<sup>85</sup>

### **Indian Independence Act**

On the 4th July 1947, the Indian Independence Bill was introduced in the House of Commons. High tributes were paid to both Mr. Attlee and Lord Mountbatten by members of the British Parliament. The Bill was passed without any amendment on July 15, and by the House of Lords on the following day, it received the Royal Assent on July 18, 1947. One of the main provisions of the Indian Independence Act, 1947, was, "two independent Dominions, known respectively as India and Pakistan, shall be set up as from the 15th day of August, 1947".<sup>86</sup>

Really, the Act was the last milestone on the highway leading to the ultimate destination of a subject nation. It was the noblest and greatest law ever enacted by the British Parliament. It was said to be a gracious and dignified farewell. Rajendra Prasad said: "The period of domination of British over India ends today and our own relationship with Britain is henceforth going to rest on a basis of equality, of mutual goodwill..."<sup>87</sup>

On July 31, 1947, a well attended meeting of the representative citizens and leading officials was held at Chapra. This meeting considered ways and means for celebrating the Indian Independence Day on August 15, 1947.<sup>88</sup>

At Siwan, in the first week of August, 1947, a representative gathering of the Union Board Presidents and leading people of the town was held under the presidentship of Maulvi S. Haque and a committee was formed to devise ways and means for the celebration of the Independence Day in a befi-

ting manner. In response to an appeal for funds Rs. 1000/- was collected on the spot besides large promises.<sup>89</sup>

At last the historic day of August 15 arrived—the last 'day of the one hundred fifty years of British rule in India, the first day of freedom for the three hundred and fifty million Indian people, the day on which men and women were understandably besides themselves with joy, when countless delirious crowds flooded the streets, breaking down all restraints, obstructing the Viceregal and ministerial processions, pressing round the Assembly Hall, shouting slogans of victory to India and its leaders, and indulging in a carnival of noisy and riotous revelry.<sup>90</sup>

On the 15th August 1947, the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee under the presidentship of Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, celebrated the Independence Day with greatest enthusiasm.<sup>91</sup>

Rajendra Prasad sent the following message to the Editor of the *Indian Nation* on the occasion of the Independence Day :

On the 15th of August, we have no doubt been freed from chain of political slavery, but we have still to face economic difficulties. As long as we do not get over these difficulties, we cannot have real blessing of freedom. I hope the auspicious day of August 15, will give us inspiration for an all round prosperity of India.<sup>92</sup>

'Independence Day' was celebrated throughout the district of Saran with great joy and enthusiasm.<sup>93</sup>

Thus the period between 1943 to 1947 proved to be one of the most important periods in the history of the Freedom Movement in India. This period saw the 21 days fast of Mahatma Gandhi, the release of all Political leaders of India including Jai Prakash Narain. It also witnessed the gigantic efforts of Rajendra Prasad in organising relief to the epidemic affected people of northern Bihar and finally this period also saw the delicate negotiations that were carried on between the Indian National Congress and the British Government for the

grant of complete Independence to the country. The people of Saran were not the mute spectator during this momentous period of National Movement. They contributed their mite towards making the struggle a success. They also celebrated the diamond jubilee of Rajendra Prasad, their beloved leader in the period under review. Thus, the people of the district of Saran contributed a good deal in arousing political consciousness in Bihar and organising active opposition to the repressive policies of the British Government with regard to the Indian National Movement. Their efforts were ultimately crowned with success in 1947.

### Notes

1. File No. 18/1/1943, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. II, p. 488.
4. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. III, pp. 292-294.
5. File No. 18/2/43, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
6. *The Indian Nation*, March 4, 1943.
7. File No. 18/3/43, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *The Indian Nation*, May 1, 1943.
10. Jai Prakash Narain belongs to village Sitab-Diara which was then in Saran district. At present this village has been transferred to Ballia district (U.P.).
11. Reports of the events in Bihar during the first half of November, 1942.



12. Majumdar, R.C., *Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, p 669.
13. *The Indian Nation*, April 13, 1946.
14. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, p 269.
15. Report on the events in Bihar during the first half of September, 1942.
16. Majumdar, R.C., *Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, p. 671.  
Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. III. p. 273.
17. Majumdar, R.C., *Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, p 671.
18. File No. 18/5/1943, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
19. File No. 18/6/1943, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
20. This information is based on personal interview with Jang Bahadur Singh on the 1st September, 1971, and Ramanand Yadava, General Secretary, Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, Patna on the 10th June 1973, respectively.
21. Based on the interview with Jang Bahadur Singh on the 1st September, 1971.  
File No. 18/6/1943, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi
22. File No. 18/6/1943, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
23. *Ibid.*
24. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar* Vol. III, p. 301.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Report on the events in Bihar during the second half of August, 1943, available in the National Archives of India, New Delhi.
27. File No. 18/8/1943, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
28. File No. 18/10/1943, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
29. *Ibid.*
30. File No. 675 of 1943, Bihar Political (Special) Department.
31. File No. 18/12/43, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
32. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. III, p. 314.
33. *Ibid.*

34. Report on the events in Bihar during the first half of May, 1944, available in the National Archives of India, New Delhi.
35. *The Indian Nation*, August 14, 1944.
36. *Ibid.*, December 3, 1944 (Dak Edition).
37. Though diamond jubilee was actually due on a day after i.e., 3rd December, 1944.
38. *The Indian Nation*, December 4, 1944.
39. *Ibid.*, December 10, 1944 (Dak Edition).
40. She is the wife of late Phulena Prasad Shrivastava who was shot dead by Police at Maharajganj (Saran) while he was attempting to hoist the national flag at the Police Station in 1942.
41. *The Indian Nation*, December 17, 1944 (Dak Edition).
42. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. III, pp. 325-326.
43. File No. 18/6/45, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
44. File No. 18/7/47, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
45. Report on the events in Bihar during first half of August, 1945, available in State Archives of Bihar, Patna.
46. *Ibid.*
47. Diwakar, R.R., *Bihar Through the Ages*, pp. 671-672.
48. *The Indian Nation*, September 25, 1945.
49. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. II, p. 672.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 673,
51. File No. 18/9/45, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
52. *Ibid.*
53. File No. 18/10/45, Home (Political) Department, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
54. *The Indian Nation*, January 26, 1946 (Dak Edition).
55. *Ibid.*, February 14, 1946. (Dak Edition).
56. Ex-Finance Minister of Bihar.
57. *The Indian Nation*, February 27, 1946 (Dak Edition).
58. *Ibid.*, January 20 and 21, 1946 (Dak Edition).

59. *Ibid.*, March 15, 1946 (Dak Edition).
60. *Ibid.*, March 14, 1946 (Dak Edition).
61. *Ibid.*, April 3, 1946 (Dak Edition).
62. *Ibid.*
63. *Ibid.*, April 4, 1946 (Dak Edition).
64. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. III, pp. 332-333.
65. *The Indian Nation*, April 13, 1946 (Dak Edition),
66. *Ibid.*, April 16, 1946 (Dak Edition).
67. *The Searchlight*, October 17, 1946.
68. *Ibid.*, October 26, 1946.
69. *Ibid.*, October 27, 1946.
70. Jalalpur is four miles away from Chapra.
71. *The Searchlight*, October 28, 1946.
72. *Ibid.*
73. *Ibid.*
74. *Ibid.*, October 31, 1946.
75. *Ibid.*
76. *Ibid.*
77. *Ibid.*
78. *Ibid.*, November 5, 1946.
79. *Ibid.*, November 3, 1946.
80. *Ibid.* When the General Elections was held in Bihar in March, 1946, at that time Jaglal Chaudhary was behind the bars on political grounds.
81. *The Searchlight*, December 11, 1946.
82. Datta, K.K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. III, p. 350.
83. *The Searchlight*, December 12, 1946.
84. Diwakar, R.R., *Bihar Through the Ages*, pp. 674-675.
73. Majumdar, R.C., *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, p. 808.
86. Majumdar, R.C., *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, p. 814.
87. Bhagwan, Vishnoo, *Constitutional History of India and National Movement*, p. 310.

88. *The Indian Nation*, August 5, 1947.
89. *Ibid.*, August 8, 1947.
90. Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, p. 550 (1972).
91. Based on the information given by Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, ex-Chief Minister of Bihar.
92. *The Indian Nation*, August 15, 1947.
93. *Ibid.*, August 18, 19, 1947.

# VIII

## CONCLUSION

The review of the successive phases of India's Struggle for Independence makes it quite apparent that the district of Saran played a highly significant role in it. The people there, did not remain silent spectators during the period of the Great Revolt of 1857. Some of them did also join the rank and file of the rebels. In fact along with the Indian Sepoys at Sugauli, petty zamindars and a number of other people of the locality also rose in rebellion. The district was also visited by Muhammad Hussain, the leader of Oudh mutineers, who entered in it in October with a band of five hundred followers and plundered the factories owned by Englishmen there. The situation became so serious that the British Government was compelled to send a contingent of Gurkha soldiers to suppress the rebels. But in December 1857, another band of rebels came from the direction of Gorakhpur and attacked the outpost of Guthani, then manned by a detachment of 55 Sikh soldiers, who fled away at the approach of the rebels. The British Government was then forced to call a Gurkha Regiment from Nepal and with their help the rebellious district was soon brought under control. Some loyal Indians like Maharaja Rajendra Krishna Bahadur of Bettiah and Maharaja Chattardhari Singh of Hathua, Shah Khyrat Hussain, Shah Ahmad

Hossain and a few others also openly supported them in crushing the rebels. The Movement of 1857-59, was thus suppressed, no doubt, but it produced significant consequences as well which proved quite disastrous to the British rulers in the long run.

The post-1859 period saw the development of some new forces in India which brought about transformation in the various phases of her life. Indian mind became greatly stirred by the cultural renaissance and the Reformation Movement that came during the second half of the nineteenth century. The growing acquaintance with the progressive political thought of the West and the startling achievements of the revolutions of Modern Europe resulted in the triumph of nationalism and democracy. It also saturated the minds of some educated Indians with the ideas of liberalism and national freedom. The district of Saran could not but be fully affected by this strong wave of renaissance that surged throughout the country.

From very early days of the Indian National Congress, which was founded in 1885, Bihar including Saran was associated with it. It is rather remarkable that though Bihar was a part of the province of Bengal, a separate Provincial Congress Committee was allowed to be formed here in 1906. The great and illustrious son of Saran and the first President of the Indian Republic, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, commenced his association with the Congress from this very year (1906) when he joined the Calcutta Session as a volunteer. He felt himself gradually drawn towards it and he ultimately joined it formally during its Annual Session at Calcutta in 1911. Since then his association with the Indian National Congress became intimate and forceful. His example served, as a source of great inspiration for other people of the district to join the great organisation.

Saran played heroic part in the Champaran Movement where the poor peasants had been subjected to all the rigours of the highly oppressive system of Indigo cultivation carried on there by the European indigo planters. Coercion on the peasants for converting their lands into indigo producing fields, exaction of forced labours from them under various kinds of threat, extremely meagre payments and some time no payment at all

besides forcible realization of heavy fines—all these formed some of the most objectionable features of the system. The earlier efforts of the peasants to save themselves from this oppression had proved fruitless due to powerful influence then wielded by the planters. The relief, however, came through a moral force, generated by the mission of Mahatma Gandhi, in the fulfilment of which unstinted and zealous co-operation was offered by the illustrious sons of Saran like Braj Kishore Prasad, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Mazharul Haque, Gorakh Prasad, Shambhu Sharan and others. This Champaran Movement did indeed leave its great impact on the political and social condition of Saran where Braj Kishore Prasad even sponsored an anti-*pardah* movement.

The later political history of Saran follows the trends that were common for the whole of India. A large number of Biharees and particularly those from the Saran district, well-known for their martial spirit, joined the Great War of 1914-18 at a critical moment. This fostered great expectations; but the Montagu-Chelmsford's Reform proposals in July 1918, were felt to be extremely inadequate. Subsequent incidents came rapidly one after another. Rowlatt Act, the Jallianwala Bagh incident at Amritsar, the horrors that were committed in the name of martial law in the Punjab, all created unrest and frustration throughout India. The Muslims then resented the humiliating terms offered to Turkey and organised a mass Khilafat Movement which for a pretty long time worked in close co-operation with the Congress. In alliance with the Khilafat leaders, Mahatma Gandhi started the Non-cooperation Movement in 1920, based strictly on principles of non-violence and truth. Saran took an active part in this Non-cooperation Movement of Mahatma Gandhi. Several ardent nationalists of the district withdrew their candidature from the elections to the Council. A big meeting was organised at Darauli in the district of Saran on the eve of the *kartik purnima mela* under the guidance of Dr. Rajendra Prasad who had thrown away a lucrative practice as an Advocate in the Patna High Court at the call of Gandhiji. Not only Dr. Rajendra Prasad, a large number of lawyers of Saran also gave up their practice at the bar. Dr. Rajendra Prasad also resigned from the Patna Uni-

versity Senate and the Syndicate and severed his relationship with the Governing Body of Bihar National College, Patna. The British Government was very much active in suppressing the Non-cooperation Movement throughout India including the district of Saran. Notwithstanding the Saran District Congress Committee was engaged in propaganda against drinking and use of foreign articles. The British Government arrested a large number of volunteers of Saran for picketing at the liquor shops. But the Non-cooperation Movement in Saran made remarkable progress as a mass struggle. Even the students became animated by a new spirit of awakening and they boycotted their schools in large numbers.

As a gesture to conciliate the Indians, the British Government then sent the Prince of Wales to India. He landed at Bombay on the 17th November, 1921 ; but he was greeted with *hartals* on his arrival throughout the country including Saran.

Next came the boycott of the Simon Commission, appointed as it was with non-Indian members to draw up a blueprint of future India. When the Simon Commission visited Patna (12th December 1928), there was a great assembly of people including hundreds from Saran district at the Patna Railway Station with black flags and full-throated slogan "Simon, go back".

Another phase of the Non-cooperation Movement known as the Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-34) was soon initiated by Gandhiji and it was fully implemented in the Saran district. Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and his illustrious wife, Kamla Nehru, undertook a whirlwind tour of the Bihar districts. In course of this tour, Pandit Nehru came to Chapra (Saran) on the 31st March 1930. He also addressed huge meetings at Dighwara, Parsa, Amnaur, Baniapore and Goreakothi in Saran. The districts of Saran and Champaran had been given priority over others for starting the Civil Disobedience Movement in Bihar in 1930. The Congress leaders of Saran accordingly directed their fullest attention towards educating and preparing the people for the coming Civil Disobedience Movement.



The *Satyagraha* was formally launched on the 6th April 1930, by Mahatma Gandhi by violating the monopoly on salt at Dandi, a sea-side village in the Surat district, about two hundred miles from the Sabarmati *ashram*. It was a signal for the nation to begin the *Satyagraha* throughout the country. Salt laws were broken at three places in the first instance in district viz., Bareja on the 6th April 1930, Goreakothi on the 7th April 1930 and Hajiapore on the 8th April 1930. But the Movement soon became widespread. There was indeed an outburst of a mass Movement throughout the district in which even the women folk participated in the large numbers. Besides breaking the salt laws through manufacturing salt by crude process, strikes, boycott of British goods and liquor shops were also resorted to. The government adopted highly repressive measures to suppress the movement. It promulgated a series of ordinances by which the normal laws were suspended and stringent restrictions were imposed on the press. Men and women were *lathi*-charged and mercilessly beaten. Even persons like Ram Sundar Lal of village Achari-bankata under police station Bhorey in the district of Saran, who was a *Dalpati* of the Congress volunteer of the locality, were brutally murdered by some hirelings of the British Government. An interpellation was even put in this connection in the Legislative Council by Shrinandan Prasad Narayan Singh Sharma of Saran. But the brave people of Saran remained undaunted in face of these atrocities and they continued the Movement with unflinching determination.

Soon there was a change in Government policy in India on 26th January 1931, when the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, released Mahatma Gandhi unconditionally as also the members of the Congress Working Committee. This was followed by the signing of an agreement between Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Irwin on the 5th March 1931. In the Karachi Session of the Indian National Congress held in the last week of March 1931, Mahatma Gandhi was appointed as the sole representative of the Indian National Congress to attend the second Round Table Conference which was held in London from the 7th September 1931 to 1st December 1931. The district of Saran sent thirty-three delegates to attend the Karachi Session of the Congress. The

Round Table Conference met at the scheduled date in London but it brought great disappointment to India. Mahatma Gandhi returned disappointed from London and landed in Bombay on the 28th December 1931. He found that the whole country including the district of Saran then groaned under severe repressive measures of the government. A large number of people in Bihar including Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Dr. Syed Mahmud had been arrested. Nearly thirty-seven persons from the district of Saran were convicted and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment between 1st January 1932 and 28th February 1932. The Congress and its Committees were declared unlawful by the government. The government resorted to all sorts of coercive measures for smashing the Civil Disobedience Movement. The people of Saran along with others met the challenge boldly and passed through the ordeal by risking everything dear to them. This is borne out by the testimony of the British officers themselves. In his Confidential Weekly Diary, for example, the Superintendent of Police, Saran, had reported that by 31st May 1930, as many as thirty-two Chaukidars had tendered their resignation from their services. A host of lawyers had besides given up their practices and many teachers had tendered their resignations in obedience to the clarion call of Mahatma Gandhi.

The Civil Disobedience Movement, however, grew gradually slack due to certain reasons since the middle of 1933. The Congress under the advice of Mahatma Gandhi decided in July 1933, to suspend mass Civil Disobedience. The Individual Civil Disobedience was, however, permitted. But before Gandhiji could give the lead to Individual Civil Disobedience, he was arrested on the 1st August 1933. In the meantime, the brave people of Saran continued their agitation and the Government records show that between October 1932 and February 1933 sixtyfour persons were arrested from the district of Saran alone. Out of this sixtyfour, case was withdrawn against one, apology was accepted from another, the third was acquitted and the remaining sixtyone were convicted.

The year 1934, started with an unprecedented calamity for Bihar. In the afternoon of the 15th January 1934, there.

occurred a terrible earthquake which devastated vast areas, destroyed thousands of human lives and caused terrible damage to lands and buildings. A Bihar Central Relief Committee was formed with Dr. Rajendra Prasad as Chairman. Mahatma Gandhi also came to Bihar and in course of his tour he visited Chapra on the 27th March 1934.

Mahatma Gandhi's visit to Bihar in 1934, was significant not only from the humanitarian point of view but also from political point of view. It was under his inspiration that the Working Committee of the Congress which sat at Patna from 18th to 20th May 1934, recommended suspension of the Civil Disobedience Movement. The Congress at the same time decided to contest the ensuing elections of the legislature. This resulted in its sweeping victory at the polls in 1937 throughout India including the district of Saran. A Congress ministry was consequently formed in Bihar in July 1937 with Dr. Shrikrishna Sinha as Premier. It is rather significant that two ministers of this cabinet viz. Dr. Syed Mahmud and Jaglal Chaudhary belonged to the district of Saran.

While the guns were booming at the war front and the second world war was proving disastrous for the Allied powers, the 53rd session of the Indian National Congress was held at Ramgarh in South Bihar in March 1940. Saran provided a good number of volunteers for this session. It also contributed a large amount of money as donations for meeting the necessary expenses at Ramgarh. A large number of delegates from the district also attended the Congress.

In fulfilment of the directive of the Ramgarh Session of the Congress, the people of Saran began to prepare for the *Satyagraha* Movement that was in offing. A *Satyagraha* camp was organised at Sonapur (Saran) for this purpose. During one week of the *Satyagraha* camp at Sonapur attended by volunteers from all parts of Bihar, four hundred thirtysix miles and eleven hundred yards of yarn were spun. Out of this, thirtynine miles and seven hundred fiftyeight yards of yarn were spun by the thirtyfive volunteers belonging to the district of Saran.

The 'August Offer' of 1940, was wholly rejected by the Indian National Congress because it failed to satisfy the national aspirations of the Congressmen. Mahatma Gandhi started the Individual *Satyagraha* Movement in order to maintain the spirit of resistance of Indian people in face of the repressive measures of the British Government. Saran also responded to the call of Mahatma Gandhi; till the 7th June, 1941, three hundred thirtyone persons from the district of Saran alone offered the Individual *Satyagraha* for which many of them had to serve various terms of imprisonment. With the starting of the Individual Civil Disobedience Movement, several members of the District Board and Municipality as also of the Local Boards, who were elected on the Congress tickets, tendered their resignation from their respective memberships.

The failure of the Cripps Mission naturally produced feelings of frustration amongst Indians, who had already become alarmed and excited at the menace of the Japanese advancing with rapid strides towards the country. The Congress leaders felt that for organising a 'Peoples War' against the Japanese, the complete transfer of power to Indian hands was necessary. Consequently on 14th July 1942, the Congress Working Committee met at Wardha and adopted the 'Quit India' resolution. This resolution was approved by the All India Congress Committee on the 8th of August 1942, at Bombay. But early on the 9th August 1942, the British Government arrested Mahatma Gandhi, the members of the Congress Working Committee and some other leaders of the Congress. The All India Congress Committee was also banned. This was immediately followed by countrywide mass upheaval and disorders. The district of Saran closely followed the dictates of the All India Congress Committee in the chaotic days of 1942, on the wake of the Quit India Movement. A large number of people of Saran courted arrest and suffered great hardship. On 11th August 1942, out of seven youngmen who lost their lives on account of firing at Patna Secretariat, two of them, Umakant Prasad Sinha and Rajendra Singh, belonged to the district of Saran. During the period of mass uprising of the Indian people in 1942, Saran played her role remarkably well. Police brutality assumed various forms and terrorism was resorted to-

in all its nakedness. But the brave people of Saran remained undaunted and they continued their activities unabated. Their subversive activities during this great upheaval created such a terror in the minds of the British authorities that even Lord Linlithgow, the then Viceroy of India, appeared to look upon the district as quite "dangerous" and he referred about it in his communication to Mr. Amery, the then Secretary of State for India. For sometime, at some places in Saran, the Government authority was completely paralysed. The Government officers had left the place out of terror and the administration came into the hands of the local people. At many places the police and the Magistracy opened fire which resulted in the death of several persons. From the Government records of the Bihar State Central Records Room, Patna, we get the information that twenty-two persons lost their lives as a result of police firing in the great uprising of 1942 in Saran. There is also testimony to the effect that one thousand fourteen persons were arrested in the district of Saran out of whom eight hundred sixteen were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, one hundred nine were sentenced to whipping, and thirtynine were kept as detenues.

The Government thus suppressed the August Movement of 1942, by severe repressive measures: but the people of Saran did not remain completely dormant. Some of them went underground and continued their 'Quit India' agitation. A few people went to the Nepal 'Terai' and joined the underground revolutionary movement there.

The people of Saran did not thus remain as mute spectators during the long period of India's struggle for Independence rather they remained in the forefront of the national Movement and played a leading role in the great struggle. The sacrifices of the brave sons of Saran, nay, of the people of India as a whole, did not go in vain. On the 15th August 1947, the British rule in India came to an end and India became independent. Thus the attainment of independence by India is the fruit of unceasing toils and great sufferings of the people of India including those of the district of Saran.

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX I**

*(Mr. Jagat Narain's Resignation)*

Mr. Jagat Narain, a brilliant graduate of the university who was serving as a Laboratory Assistant of the Patna College addressed the following letter to the Principal, resigning his post :

“Sir, I have long been reflecting upon the mighty problems of life and trying to see how far the education we are receiving aims at solving them. After long and anxious consideration I have come to the conclusion that there are things that do not and cannot come under the present realm of education. Enlightenment—true enlightenment—has no place in the current system. It is, on the contrary, deliberately intended to spread darkness in the name of enlightenment, poison—the most deadly poison—in the name of nectar. Far from aiming at any real goal to the recipients of this education it is solely meant to dwarf us, mentally, morally & spiritually, so that we may become perfect slaves, not only physically but also mentally and the bureaucracy may be after us to turn us to its best advantage.

Such being the aims and objects of the western education in India, it appears to me to be a positive disservice to the motherland to help in any way in its promulgation.

And what do we find in other fields ? Let us take the political situation of the country. It stands proved today beyond the least shadow of doubt that the bureaucracy is here not to do any good to us, but rather to enrich itself by exploiting us in thousand ways. Sacrifice men, money and everything we

ought to, that is preached to us to be our bounden duty when Government is in danger but what is the return ? Nothing save the Rowlatt Act, the Punjab Atrocities, the justice that showers praises over the proved perpetrators of the crimes, the dismemberment of Turkey in direct contradiction to the pledges given and in utter disregard of the profound religious feelings of our Mohammadan brothers and so forth.

Considering all those questions my only course that at present appears to be of use to us is the one started by our eminent Mahatmaji—I mean Non-cooperation. I am fully aware of the trouble that may follow such a step, especially when my family is not at all in a position to do without me. That is in fact a problem that has withheld me so long from joining the movement. But on deeper considerations I have felt convinced that sacrifice is the law of reform and liberty can never be brought without sacrifice, and the family question must be set at rest when the national is at stake. With these pieces of sound advice from my conscience I rush forward to cooperate whole-heartedly with the non-cooperators at the country's call, in spite of the many troubles and opposition that I have already met or that I may still come across, leaving all consequences upon God, for He is the Divine Ruler of all, individual and nations alike. There can be no injustice at His hands. If my cause is right, and it is right for my conscience tells me, so good must surely come out of it, no matter, at what apparent cost.

In these circumstances I beg to inform the authorities that I withdraw my application for confirmation made sometimes ago, that I forgo my claims to appear at the next M. Sc. examination, permission for which the Vice-Chancellor and the Syndicate of Patna University have so kindly granted me and also hereby resign the post. I have been so long holding in the capacities of the Assistant Physical Laboratory and Assistant Superintendent of the Minto Hindu Hostel and I hope I shall be relieved very soon.

I have the honour to be, Sir,  
your most obedient servant,  
Sd/- Jagat Narain.

Dated, Patna, the 3rd December 1920.

## APPENDIX II

*Approved as per Education Committee Resolution No. YVIII  
dt. 4.9.1924*

॥ ईश—विनय ॥

मैथली शरण गुप्त कृत 'भारत भारती' से उद्धृत (सोहनी)

इस देश को हे दीन बन्धु आप फिर अपनाइए,  
भगवान भारतवर्ष को फिर पुण्य-भूमि बनाइये ।  
जड़ तुल्य जीवन आज इसका विह्वल-बाधा पूर्ण है,  
हे रम्ब अब अवलम्ब देकर विहन् हर कहलाइए ॥ १ ॥  
हम मूक किम्बा मूढ़ हों, रहते हुए तुम शक्ति के ।  
मां बाहिन, कह दे बुहम से सुख-शान्ति फिर सरसाइये ।  
सर्वत्र बाहर और भीतर रिक्त भारत हो चुका,  
फिर भाग्य इसका हे विधाता, पूर्व सा पलटाइए ॥ २ ॥  
तू अन्नपूर्णा मां रमा है और हम भूखों मरें,  
कहदे जनार्दन से जाकर दैन्य दुःख मिटाइए ।  
यह सृष्टि-गौरव गज ग्रसित है ग्रह दशा के ग्राह से,  
हे भक्त-वत्सल शुभ सुदर्शनचक्र आप चलाइए ॥ ३ ॥  
मां शकरो सन्तान तेरी हाय यों निरुपाय हो,  
श्रीकण्ठ से कहदे कि हे हर, अब न और सताइए ।  
शून्य-श्मशान-समान भारत हाय कब से हो चुका,  
आकर कराल विपत्ति-विष से व्योमकेश बचाइए ॥ ४ ॥  
सम्पूर्ण गुण-गौरव रहित हम पतित अवनत हो चुके,  
अब छोड़ निर्गुणता विभो, सत्वर सगुण बन जाइए ।  
सीता पते सीता पते यह पाप-भार निहारिए,  
अवतीर्ण होकर धर्म का निज राज्य फिर फैलाइए ॥ ५ ॥  
गोपाल अब यह चैन की बंशी बजेगी कब यहां,  
आलस्य से अभिभूत हमको कर्म योग सिखाइए ।  
जिस वसुमती पर आपने बहुत ललित लीलाएं रचीं,  
करुणानिधे इस काल उस को आप यों न भूलाइए ॥ ६ ॥  
पशु-तुल्य परवशता मिटे, प्रकटे यथार्थ मनुष्यता,  
इस कूप मराड़कत्व से परमेश पिराड छुड़ाइए ।  
जीवन गहन बन-सा हुआ है, भटकते हैं हम जहाँ,



प्रभुवर सदय होकर हमें सन्मार्ग पर पहुँचाइए ॥ ७ ॥  
 वह पूर्व सम्पन्नता यह वर्तमान विपन्नता,  
 अब तो प्रसन्न भविष्य की आशा यहाँ उपजाइए ।  
 नटवर मन्त्र जिसका मुक्ति था परतन्त्र पीड़ित है वही,  
 फिर वह परम पुरुषार्थ इसमें शीघ्र ही प्रकटाइए ॥ ८ ॥  
 यह पाप-पूर्ण परावलम्बन चूर्ण होकर दूर हो,  
 फिर स्वावलम्बन का हमें प्रिय पूज्य पाठ पढ़ाइए ।  
 व्याकुल न हो कुछ भय नहीं तुम सब विपुल सन्तान हो,  
 यह वेद की वाणी हमें फिर एक बार सुनाइए ॥ ९ ॥  
 यह आर्य भूमि सचेत हो फिर कार्य भूमि बने अहा,  
 वह प्रीति नीति बढ़े परस्पर, भीति-भाव भगाइए ।  
 किसके शरण होकर रहें, अब तुम बिना गति कौन है ।  
 हे देव वह अपनी दया फिर एक बार दिखाइए ॥ १० ॥

## APPENDIX III

## NON-PAYMENT OF TAXES IN BIHAR

*(Shri Jaleshwar Prasad, Chapra)*

After the Lahore Congress the problem of Mass Civil Disobedience in this province must be engaging the attention of all the well-wishers of the Congress programme. I, therefore, want to place before the public the conclusions at which I have arrived. The central idea in Mass Disobedience is non-payment of taxes. Let us therefore examine the question of non-payment of taxes in this province. The three principal sources of income to the local government are :

1. Land Revenue
2. Court fees and stamps and
3. Excise duty, on liquor or intoxicating drugs.

The Government whose income is almost 6 crores of rupees gets about 2 crores from each of those sources. Let me therefore examine each item one by one.

First, about land revenue, we can succeed in stopping its payment. I believe not. The reason is not far to seek. The largest amount of revenue is paid by Rajas and by zamindars who cannot in the immediate future be expected to side with the Congress on this point. And even if some of the smaller zamindars agree to stop payment of land revenue, their zamindari can be purchased by one big zamindar like the Maharaja or Court of Wards of Bettiah and these latter would gladly take the risk of paying Government revenue of their newly purchased zamindari for a few years without return. Hence it is clear that any scheme of non-payment of Government revenue in this province cannot be effective or in other words is bound to fail so long as the mentality of the zamindar class is not changed of which there does not seem to be any prospect in the near future. The second big item of Government's income is court fees and stamps. Although no disobedience is possible so far as this income is concerned, for you cannot go a munsif and ask to hear your case without paying

the court fees. Yet this income can be appreciably decreased if we begin on extensive propaganda against law courts. But that will not be any disobedience. Similar is the case with excise. One may not disobey the excise law, but it is possible to decrease the Government's income under this head if only we launch on an extensive propaganda against drink and drug settlement of shops made by Government in the month of February or March. Hence work should be begun at once.

Well it might then be asked—Is there no tax except the land revenue in this province the non-payment of which will amount to disobedience? The answer is that there is. First is the Chaukidari tax, the most hated of all taxes. The income from this tax is about one crore of rupees. The largest amount to which this tax can go in the case of any individual, be he a Maharaja, is only twelve rupees. I have not come across a single villager who likes this tax for the simple reason that the Chaukidar is more an oppressor than a friend to the village folk. Hence it is not very difficult to succeed in stopping this oppressive tax. There is not much risk to individuals involved in stopping it.

But the second tax which can be more easily stopped is the salt tax. The income of Government from this source is 5 crores of rupees from the whole of India. The total population of British India being about 24 crores, and the population of this province being 33 million it is essential that roughly the people of this province must be paying 75 lakhs of rupees to Government on account of their consumption of salt. This is a sort of poll tax for which there is absolutely no justification and we can stop we should do it.

It is not so much the amount that matters but it is the mental state of inertia and helplessness and inferiority complex that stands in the way of our active assertion of our rights. We have to show to Government that they cannot govern us against our will. The plan is very simple. Salt is not only imported but it is also manufactured in this province along with saltpetre or netre. In every village there is such a small plot of land known as *nonia* where the village-Nonia prepares saltpetres, that is earth containing high percentage of saltpetre or common

salt. For this he has to take a license by paying annas four to the Government. It is from this saltpetre earth that in village indigenous factories netre and common salt are produced. For working such a factory, the factory-wallahs have to take another license by payment of Rs. 20/- to the Government. Neither the village factory nor the village Nonia requires any large apparatus. The only thing required to manufacture salt and netre are earthen fire place, some earthen pitchers and a few ordinary iron pans.

The saltpetre earth is manufactured out of a sort of saline earth found deposited in villages from where it is scraped. Hence it would appear that disobedience of salt law and the consequent stoppage of the salt tax is more easy of accomplishment than of persons ready to court jail life, and their number is not wanting. I can assure the leaders that if only they agree on this scheme, the district of Saran also would furnish thousands of such volunteers. I am publishing this article in the press so that the members of the Provincial Congress Committee may come prepared at the next meeting to consider programme of non-payment of taxes on the lines suggested above. I may here give the information that through the efforts of Babu Rambinod Singh and his faithful band of workers, the Dighwara P.S. is being prepared for a campaign of non-payment of taxes in this district of Saran.

Yours etc.  
Jaleshwar Prasad  
Chapra.<sup>1</sup>

1. *The Searchlight*, February 12, 1930.

## APPENDIX IV

*(Rule 26(i) of Defence of India Rules)*

The following is the text of Rule 26 (i) of the Defence of India Rules, which has been prominent in the news recently :

"The Central Government or the Provincial Government if it is satisfied with respect to any particular person that with a view to preventing him from acting in any manner prejudicial to the efficient prosecution of war, to the defence of British India or to public order it is necessary so to do, may make an order:

(a) directing such person to remove himself from British India in such manner, by such time and by such route as may be specified in the order, and prohibiting his return to British India.

(b) directing that he be detained.

(c) directing that, except in so far as he may be permitted by the provisions of the order, or by such authority or persons as may be specified therein, he shall not be in any such area or place in British India as may be specified in the order.

(d) requiring him to reside or remain in such place or within such area in British India as may be specified in the order.

(e) requiring him to notify his movements in such manner at such times and to such authority or person as may be specified in the order.

(f) imposing upon him such restrictions as may be specified in the order in respect of his employment or business in respect of his association or communication with other persons, and in respect of his activities in relations to the dissemination of news or propagation of opinions.

(g) prohibiting or restricting the possession or use by him of any such article or articles as may be specified in the order.

(h) otherwise regulating his conduct in any such particular as may be specified in the order.<sup>1</sup>

1. *The Indian Nation*, April 28, 1943.

## APPENDIX V

*Government's consolidated statement of persons detained under rule 26 (i) (b) of the Defence of India Rules in connection with the Civil Disobedience Movement for the month of August, September, October and November, 1942*  
**SARAN**

Name	No. and date of order	Date of arrest	Jail where detained
1. Krishna Deo Pandey	96 C.P. 10.8.42	9.8.42	Patna Camp Jail
2. Tribhuwan Kalwar	100 C.P. "	9.8.42	Motihari Jail
3. Jagannath Mishra	111 C.P. "	9.8.42	Motihari Jail
4. Manik Chand Singh	94 C.P. "	10.8.42	Motihari Jail
5. Ram Binod Singh	97 C.P. "	"	Motihari Jail
6. Ram Briksh Singh Brahamchari	98 C.P. "	"	Patna Camp Jail
7. Bam Bhawan Singh	101 C.P. "	"	Motihari Jail
8. Jagannath Prasad	102 C.P. "	"	Motihari Jail
9. Kailash Pandey	105 C.P. "	"	Motihari Extra Jail
10. Jaibir Prasad	106 C.P. "	11.8.42	Motihari Jail
11. Bishwanath Prasad Brahman	108 C.P. "	10.8.42	Motihari Jail

(contd.)

## (contd.) APPENDIX V

Name	No. and date of order	date of arrest	Jail where detained
12. Jag Narayan Singh	104 C.P. 10.8.42	11.8.42	Motihari Jail
13. Sita Bihari Saran	107 C.P. "	"	Motihari Jail
14. Satya Narain Mishra	95 C.P. "	12.8.42	Motihari Jail
15. Prabhunath Singh	321 C.P. "	18.8.42	Motihari Jail
16. Jaglal Chaudhary	316 C.P. 21.8.42	23.8.42	Motihari Jail
17. Ram Ekbal Singh	110 C.P. 10.8.42	Arrested at Darbhanga G.O. sent to S.P. Darbhanga for service.	
18. Kamla Rai	325 C.P. 21.8.42	13.8.42	Motihari Jail
19. Pashupati Singh	317 C.P. 11.9.42	"	Motihari Jail
20. Dr. Satya Narain Singh	319 C.P. "	26.9.42	Motihari Jail
21. Ram Ganesh Singh	99 C.P. 10.8.42	Surrendered in Hajipur Court on 23.9.42, Government order sent to S.P. Muzaffarpur for Service.	
OCTOBER			
22. Jhulan Singh	315 C.P. 21.8.42	18.10.42	At present at Gopalganj.

(contd.)

## (contd.) APPENDIX V

Name	No. and date of order	Date of arrest	Jail where detained
23. Lakshmi Narayan Singh	92 C.P. 10.8.42	20.10.42	At present in Sadar Jail Chapra.
NOVEMBER			
24. Basant Nand Giri	112 C.P. 10.8.42	Arrested at Motihari	
25. Triloki Singh	322 C.P. 21.8.42	Arrested at Patna G.O. sent to S.P. Patna for service.	
26. Bhagelu Singh	5298 C.P. 1.12.42	16.8.42	At present in Chapra Jail.
27. Shatrughna Singh	326 C.P. 21.8.42	28.11.42	
28. Tribhuwan Singh	5055 C.P. 21.11.42	28.11.42 <sup>1</sup>	

1. Datta, K.K. *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. III, Appendix-H.



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- 3. Shri Jaleshwar Prasad.**
- 4. Shri Jang Bahadur Singh.**
- 5. Shri Jhulan Singh.**
- 6. Shri Mahamaya Prasad Sinha.**
- 7. Shri Mangaldeoji Brahmchari.**
- 8. Shri Mrityunjoy Prasad (Son of late Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first President of Indian Republic).**
- 9. Shri Phulandeo Giri.**
- 10. Shri Radha Krishna Tiwary alias 'Tansen'.**
- 11. Shri Rajbanshi Singh.**
- 12. Shri Rama Nand Yadava.**
- 13. Shri Sheopujan Chaudhury.**
- 14. Shri Siya Bihari Sharan.**
- 15. Shri Zawar Hosain.**



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